The Oxford History of Historical Writing

Beginnings to AD 600

EDITED BY

Andrew Feldherr
and Grant Hardy

THE OXFORD HISTORY OF
HISTORICAL WRITING

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The Oxford History of Historical Writing is a five-volume, multi-authored scholarly survey of the history of historical writing across the globe. It is a chronological history of humanity's attempts to conserve, recover, and narrate its past with considerable attention paid to different global traditions and their points of comparison with Western historiography. Each volume covers a particular period, with care taken to avoid unduly privileging Western notions of periodization, and the volumes cover progressively shorter chronological spans, reflecting both the greater geographical range of later volumes and the steep increase in historical activity around the world since the nineteenth century. *The Oxford History of Historical Writing* is the first collective scholarly survey of the history of historical writing to cover the globe across such a substantial breadth of time.

Volume 1: Beginnings to AD 600

Volume 2: 400–1400

Volume 3: 1400–1800

Volume 4: 1800–1945

Volume 5: Historical Writing since 1945

THE OXFORD HISTORY OF HISTORICAL WRITING

Daniel Woolf

GENERAL EDITOR

The Oxford History of Historical Writing

VOLUME I: BEGINNINGS TO AD 600

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General Editor's Acknowledgements

The *Oxford History of Historical Writing* has itself been the product of several years of work and many hands and voices. As general editor, it is my pleasure to acknowledge a number of these here. First and foremost are the volume editors, without whom there would have been no series. I am very grateful for their willingness to sign on, and for their flexibility in pursuing their own vision for their piece of the story while acknowledging the need for some common goals and unity of editorial practices. The Advisory Board, many of whose members were subsequently roped into either editorship or authorship, have given freely of their time and wisdom. At Oxford University Press, former commissioning editor Ruth Parr encouraged the series proposal and marshalled it through the readership and approvals process. After her departure, my colleagues and I enjoyed able help and support from Christopher Wheeler at the managerial level and, editorially, from Rupert Cousens, Seth Cayley, Matthew Cotton, and Stephanie Ireland. I must also thank the OUP production team and Carol Bestley in particular.

The series would not have been possible without the considerable financial support from the two institutions I worked at over the project's lifespan. At the University of Alberta, where I worked from 2002 to mid-2009, the project was generously funded by the Offices of the Vice-President (Research) and the Provost and Vice-President (Academic). I am especially grateful to Gary Kachanoski and Carl Amrhein, the incumbents in those offices, who saw the project's potential. The funding they provided enabled the project to hire a series of project assistants, to involve graduate students in the work, and to defray some of the costs of publication such as images and maps. It permitted the acquisition of computer equipment and also of a significant number of books to supplement the fine library resources at Alberta. Perhaps most importantly, it also made the crucial Edmonton conference happen. At Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, where I moved into a senior leadership role in 2009, funding was provided to push the project over the 'finish-line', to transfer the research library, and in particular to retain the services for two years of an outstanding research associate, Assistant Editor Dr Ian Hesketh. I am profoundly grateful for Ian's meticulous attention to detail, and his ability ruthlessly to cut through excess prose (including on occasion my own) in order to ensure that volumes maintained editorial uniformity internally and together with other volumes, not least because the volumes are not all being published at once. A series of able graduate students have served as project assistants, including especially Tanya Henderson, Matthew Neufeld, Carolyn Salomons, Tereasa Maillie, and Sarah Waurechen, the last of whom almost single-handedly organized the complex logistics of the

Edmonton conference. Among the others on whom the project has depended I have to thank the Office of the Dean of Arts and Science for providing project space at Queen's University, and the Department of History and Classics at Alberta. Melanie Marvin at Alberta and Christine Berga at Queen's have assisted in the management of the research accounts, as has Julie Gordon-Woolf, my spouse (and herself a former research administrator), whose advice on this front is only a small part of the support she has provided.

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Foreword

Daniel Woolf, General Editor

Half a century ago, Oxford University Press published a series of volumes entitled *Historical Writing on the Peoples of Asia.* Consisting of four volumes devoted to East Asia, South East Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia, and based on conferences held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London in the late 1950s, that series has aged surprisingly well; many of the individual essays are still being cited in our own day. The books were also remarkably ahead of their time since the history of historical writing was at that time firmly understood as being the history of a European genre. Indeed, the subject of the history of history was itself barely a subject—typical surveys of the early to mid-twentieth century by the likes of James Westfall Thompson and Harry Elmer Barnes, following Eduard Fueter's paradigmatic 1911 *Geschichte der Neuren Historiographie*, were written by master historians surveying their discipline and its origins. The Oxford series provided some much needed perspective, though it was not followed up for many years, and more recent surveys in the last two or three decades of the twentieth century have continued to speak of historiography as if it were an entirely Western invention or practice. Since the late 1990s a number of works have been published that challenge the Eurocentrism of the history of history, as well as its inherent teleology. We can now view the European historiographic venture against the larger canvas of many parallel and—a fact often overlooked—interconnected traditions of writing or speaking about the past from Asia, the Americas, and Africa.

The *Oxford History of Historical Writing* is conceived in this spirit. It seeks to provide the first collective scholarly history of historical writing to span the globe. It salutes its great predecessor of half a century ago, but very deliberately seeks neither to imitate nor to replace it. For one thing, the five volumes collectively include Europe, the Americas, and Africa, together with Asia; for another, the division among these volumes is chronological, rather than by region. We decided on the former because the history of non-European historical writing should, no more than that of its European counterpart, be viewed in isolation. We chose the latter in order to provide what amounts to a cumulative narrative (albeit with well over a hundred different voices), and in order to facilitate comparison and contrast between regions within a broad time period.

A few caveats that apply to the entire series are in order. First, while the series as a whole will describe historical writing from earliest times to the present, each

individual volume is also intended to stand on its own as a study of a particular period in the history of historical writing. These periods shrink in duration as they approach the present, both because of the obvious increase in extant materials and known authors, but also because of the expansion of subject matter to a fully global reach (the Americas, for instance, do not feature at all in volume 1; non-Muslim Africa appears in neither volume 1 nor volume 2). Second, while the volumes share a common goal and are the product of several years of dialogue both within and between its five editorial teams and the general editor, there has been no attempt to impose a common organizational structure on each volume. In fact, quite the opposite course has been pursued: individual editorial teams have been selected because of complementary expertise, and encouraged to 'go their own way' in selecting topics and envisioning the shapes of their volumes—with the sole overriding provision that each volume had to be global in ambition. Third, and perhaps most importantly, this series is emphatically neither an encyclopedia nor a dictionary. A multi-volume work that attempted to deal with *every* national tradition (much less mention every historian) would easily spread from five to fifty volumes, and in fact not accomplish the ends that the editors seek. We have had to be selective, not comprehensive, and while every effort has been made to balance coverage and provide representation from all regions of the world, there are undeniable gaps. The reader who wishes to find out something about a particular country or topic not included in the *OHHW*'s more than 150 chapters can search elsewhere, in particular in a number of reference books which have appeared in the past fifteen or so years, some of which have global range. Our volumes are of course indexed, but we have deemed a cumulative index an inefficient and redundant use of space. Similarly, each individual essay offers a highly selective bibliography, intended to point the way to further reading (and where appropriate listing key sources from the period or topic under discussion in that chapter). In order to assist readers with limited knowledge of particular regions' or nations' political and social contexts, certain chapters have included a timeline of major events, though this has not been deemed necessary in every case. While there are (with one or two exceptions) no essays devoted to a single 'great historian', many historians from Sima Qian and Herodotus to the present are mentioned; rather than eat up space in essays with dates of birth and death, these have been consolidated in each volume's index.

Despite the independence of each team, some common standards are of course necessary in any series that aims for coherence, if not uniformity. Towards that end, a number of steps were built into the process of producing this series from the very beginning. Maximum advantage was taken of the Internet: not only were scholars encouraged to communicate with one another within and across volumes, but draft essays were posted on the project's website for commentary and review by other authors. A climactic conference, convened at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada in September 2008, brought most of the editors and just over half the authors together, physically, for an energizing and exciting

two days during which matters of editorial detail and also content and substance were discussed. A major 'value-added', we think, of both conference and series, is that it has introduced to one another scholars who normally work in separate national and chronological fields, in order to pursue a common interest in the history of historical writing in unique and unprecedented ways. As the series' general editor, it is my hope that these connections will survive the end of the project and produce further collaborative work in the future.

Several key decisions came out of the Edmonton conference, among the most important of which was to permit chronological overlap, while avoiding unnecessary repetition of topics. The chronological divisions of the volumes—with calendrical years used instead of typical Western periods like 'Middle Ages' and 'Renaissance'—remain somewhat arbitrary. Thus volume 1, on antiquity, ends about AD 600, prior to the advent of Islam, but overlaps with its successor, volume 2, on what in the West were the late antique and medieval centuries, and in China (the other major tradition of historical writing that features in every volume), the period from the Tang through the early Ming dynasties. Volumes 4 and 5 have a similar overlap in the years around the Second World War. While 1945 is a sensible boundary for some subjects, it is much less useful for others—in China, again, 1949 is the major watershed. Certain topics, such as the Annales School, are not usefully split at 1945. A further change pertained to the denotation of years BC and AD; here, we reversed an early decision to use BCE and CE, on the grounds that both are equally Eurocentric forms; BC/AD have at least been adopted by international practice, notwithstanding their Christian European origins.

It became rather apparent in Edmonton that we were in fact dealing with two sets of two volumes each (vols. 1/2 and 4/5), with volume 3 serving in some ways as a bridge between them, straddling the centuries from about 1400 to about 1800—what in the West is usually considered the 'early modern' era. A further decision, in order to keep the volumes reasonably affordable, was to use illustrations very selectively, and only where a substantive reason for their inclusion could be advanced, for instance in dealing with Latin American pictographic forms of commemorating the past. There are no decorative portraits of famous historians, and that too is appropriate in a project that eschews the history of historiography conceived of as a parade of stars—whether Western or Eastern, Northern or Southern—from Thucydides to Toynbee.

Volume 1, under the editorship of Andrew Feldherr and Grant Hardy, covers the longest span of time in the entire series, reaching from the earliest known examples of historical writing in the Ancient Near East and in China, to the first centuries of 'late antiquity' in the West and the eve of the Tang dynasty in the East. The two editors, coming from very different backgrounds, have done an excellent job of putting together an international team of experts. The volume runs the gamut, chronologically and geographically, from early inscriptions, to the emergence of historiographical forms such as annals and chronicles, poetry

and prose. It deals with the complex interactions of historiography with different political structures, and with empires. The chapter topics reveal some fascinating common features, as well as critical differences, between European and Asian (here predominantly Chinese and Indian) modes of representing the past, and these are drawn together in a comparative epilogue by Sir Geoffrey Lloyd. The team has collectively presented an informative and wide-ranging account of the beginnings of historical writing and an impressive opener to the series.

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Daniel Woolf (**General Editor**) is Professor of History at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada. Among his previous publications are *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing* (1998) and *The Social Circulation of the Past* (2003). His *Global History of History* will appear in 2011.

Advisory Board

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Editors' Introduction

Andrew Feldherr and Grant Hardy

Today, around the world, scholars labour to uncover the past, and they do so with a set of tools and techniques that have proved their worth over several centuries. Historians argue with each other and try to persuade the general public according to conventions of discourse that include narrative, the critical analysis of authenticated primary sources—especially written documents, but also visual representations, oral accounts, and material artefacts—reasonable inference, the identification of cause and effect, the examination of social and cultural factors, the exposure of bias and unwarranted assumptions, and strict chronology. Historians may give more or less weight to particular types of causes, and they might write from different sorts of motivations, yet they generally share a basic approach to the past that is rational, evidence based, and secular.

This ideal of a disciplined mode of historical inquiry that can transcend national, cultural, and religious divisions has, like everything else, its own history. Over the course of the five volumes of the *Oxford History of Historical Writing*, readers can follow the development of our modern ideas about how best to understand the past. Yet this project is not designed as a straightforward narrative leading neatly from beginning to end. Rather, the series is a compilation of the work of over 150 modern scholars, each offering a distinctive take on some aspect of historical writing, but all set within a clear chronological and geographical framework. This type of heterogeneous format may be messy, but it probably offers a more accurate representation of the wondrous profusion and creativity that has characterized our human tendency to look backward for meaning.

Both the strengths and also the challenges presented by the project as a whole will be particularly evident in this first volume, which announces its chronological bounds as 'Beginnings to AD 600'. Since some of the writings under discussion date back to the third millennium BC, this volume will cover, by far, the longest time span of any in the series. It also arguably features the most diversity in approach. In chapters dealing with the relatively independent origins of history-writing in the ancient Near East, Egypt, Greece, Rome, China, and India, it will quickly become obvious how many potential ways there are to

represent the past. There are, of course, the familiar conventions of a single authorial voice reporting and reflecting on traditional accounts (as in the Hebrew Bible), oral testimony (as in Herodotus), and earlier literary accounts (as in Livy), but to focus only on these examples as forerunners of what we regard as history-writing today is to miss the brilliance of the Egyptian preference for visual rather than textual representations, or the advantages of fragmented, multi-vocal presentations such as those of Sima Qian and Fan Ye, or the legitimizing genealogies of the Indian puranas. In the last case, differences between modern conceptions of history-writing and what nineteenth-century scholars found in classical India were so great that some denied that India had any tradition of history at all before the coming of Islam. We are pleased to include two chapters in this volume that contest that narrow view.

If this first instalment of the series is, in many ways, a testament to the breathtaking range of ways in which people have dealt with memory and the past, there are nevertheless at least three common threads that run through it all. 1) We will see in various cultures and circumstances the development of historical consciousness; that is, the understanding that the past is different from the present and the realization that records kept or artefacts created will convey information to future generations. 2) Many of our contributors will trace how history as a literary genre defines itself against, even as it borrows from, other forms of discourse such as poetry, myth, rhetorical panegyric, or collections of anecdotes. 3) As writers about the past become more self-conscious the notion of historiography arises, by which we mean deliberate and sustained reflection on the act itself of writing history. This begins with historians criticizing their predecessors or rivals, and it is accelerated by the clash of cultures, as in West Asia or the Mediterranean basin, and competition among political regimes, as in China or Rome. In future volumes, historiography will flower into comprehensive, systematic analyses of historical writing in terms of evidence, accuracy, argumentation, and presentation. In the meantime, we will see many examples of ancient histories that illustrate paths not taken, or abandoned, or left undeveloped. It is not at all clear that there is a natural or inevitable way to use the past to make sense of the world. But an awareness of contingency, that things might have turned out differently, is part of what makes studying history, including the history of historical writing, so fascinating.

The emphasis in this first volume is on the origins and establishment of literary conventions concerning the past, on seeing different models of historical inquiry and representation emerge from within their own social, literary, and intellectual contexts. Our goal has been to offer broad global coverage, but we include more details on history writing in the Graeco-Roman and Chinese civilizations since these were the two most developed historiographical traditions in the ancient world, both in terms of the number of surviving works and also the extent to which history emerged as a distinct genre. By the end of our allotted time period, we will have seen some contact and merging of traditions: Herodotus knew of Egyptian historiography, Josephus introduced the Romans to Hebraic understandings of the past, and Buddhist historical genres were reshaped

as they travelled from India to China. Yet there is still nothing like a Eurasian synthesis. Sima Qian had never heard of Thucydides, and Tacitus was completely unaware of his contemporary Ban Gu. As editors, we have tried to help readers navigate a tremendous amount of diverse material in two ways. First, we asked for essays that lent themselves to cross-cultural comparisons—for example, chapters that examine the impact of inscriptions, philosophy, and empire, on representations of the past in various cultures. The second aid is a comparative epilogue, written by Sir Geoffrey Lloyd, which identifies some general patterns among diverse traditions of history-writing, including eleven distinct reasons that people have turned their attention to previous generations.

Three cautions are perhaps in order. The first is a warning about a certain slipperiness of terms, both among authors and sometimes within single chapters. As has often been pointed out, the English word *history*, somewhat inconveniently, can refer to both the past itself and writings about the past. Similarly, although the word *historiography* usually denotes the critical study of various modes and models of historical inquiry, it can also be employed as a generic synonym for all sorts of history-writing (as the etymology suggests). And, of course, since our volume ends before the invention of the English language, the individuals and traditions treated herein used other languages, each with their own distinct terminologies and connotations concerning the notions that we today categorize as history, history-writing, and historiography. For example, the semantic overlap presented by the English word *history* has a striking parallel in the Latin term *res gestae*, but does not affect the Greek *historia* (an inquiry or investigation) from which the English derives.

A second source of misunderstanding lies in the easy assumption that similar terms possess similar meanings. Such may be the case with annals and chronicles in the China chapters. Some Western readers will immediately think of the historical genres of medieval Europe, and while there are indeed some similarities in form, these are outweighed by the differences in context. The *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals], for instance, is not just a record of local events in the state of Lu. The text becomes central to the Chinese intellectual tradition, in part because of its association with Confucius, its adoption as one of the five Confucian Classics, and also because of the immensely significant *Zuozhuan* [Zuo Tradition] commentary that is attached to it. The Confucian Classics, which include historical accounts as well as poetry and ritual, anchor Confucian thought in a manner similar to the way the Hebrew Bible provides a foundation for Judaism and its sister religions.[1] This canonicity (though still fluid in both cases for many centuries) has no exact counterpart in Graeco-Roman culture.

The third temptation is to judge various historical traditions by their allegiance to factual 'truth'. When Cicero, in the first century BC, asserted that 'the

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[1] For a provocative overview of how the creation of historical writing influenced Judaism and Christianity, see Donald Harmon Akenson, *Surpassing Wonder: The Invention of the Bible and the Talmuds* (New York, 1998).

first law of history is to tell the truth', many of his listeners would have nodded in agreement, but there was enormous variety in how this commonly held value was applied over the thousand-year history of Greek and Latin history-writing. What might it have meant in the ancient world 'to tell the truth'? Unlike many modern professional historians, no classical historian would have seen this 'law' as an injunction to exploit every resource to recover the past 'as it actually was'. (And as we will see in later volumes, the ideal of disinterested objectivity will be subjected to withering criticism in the twentieth century.) For some classical writers, the emphasis would have fallen on avoiding distortions or omissions based on personal bias; others might have responded by avoiding claims that went beyond the bounds of what human experience established as plausible—divine ancestry, for example. An influential modern interpretation of Cicero's phrase holds that the 'truth' here means an established 'hard core' of known data which any historian would be expected to flesh out with circumstantial detail.[2] Herodotus memorably made a distinction between the things that can be said and the things that can be known,[3] but even Thucydides, who in other respects seems to adhere most closely to a post-Enlightenment scrupulousness in weighing evidence, composed speeches for the figures in his history in which, as he admits, the imperfect memory of what was actually said had to be supplemented by his opinion of what the situation demanded them to say (1.22.2). For Thucydides, as for all ancient historical writers, the need to present a narrative of the past fully, vividly, and persuasively exceeded the exact information at his disposal.

Unfortunately, our ending point for this book must seem artificially imposed by the chronology of the multi-volume project as a whole. There are few dramatic breaks in the history of historical writing within any one culture, and to choose a single date where innovation outweighs continuity in all the historiographies treated in the series would have been obviously impossible. The selection of AD 600 as a stopping point makes sense in relation to the number of new stories that begin in volume 2—for example Islamic, Japanese, Northern European, and American historiographies—but it seriously disrupts and distorts some of the traditions described here, particularly those of Byzantium and South Asia. Still, after the broad sweep in this first book of the series, and especially after Lloyd's analytical overview in the epilogue, readers will be well prepared to venture into later volumes to see how the choices that ancient writers made about how to represent history will influence and enrich later generations in very different historical circumstances.

[2] A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (London, 1988).
[3] For the complexities of distinguishing myth from history in Greek and Roman historiography see Denis Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History* (Berkeley, 2007), esp. 68–107.

Chapter 1

Early Mesopotamia

Piotr Michalowski

The Mesopotamians invented writing around 3200 BC without any precedent to guide them, as did the Egyptians, independently as far as we know, at approximately the same time. These two pristine writing traditions progressed independently with different trajectories, each one experimenting with the new technology of preserving information, and developing in their own ways a new form of human communication: written discourse. In Mesopotamia, the written medium never developed any form of metadiscourse, so that there are no essays, no mediations on how things should be done, and no philosophical texts. This does not mean that Mesopotamians did not indulge in reflection about the surrounding world, only that such speculation and description was expressed through poetry, lists, or basic descriptions of events, but not by means of exploratory prose narrative. It is therefore difficult to determine which uses of writing can be described as 'historical'. The problem is, moreover, complicated by a tendency of modern scholarship to use this term for any written materials that we today utilize as historical sources. Consequently, it is likely that no two Mesopotamianists would agree on the same list of texts that might be described as 'historical writing'. Since the definitional matter is much too complex to be debated here, I will, for practical reasons, adopt the description offered by John Baines in his chapter on ancient Egypt in this volume: 'History-writing is the use of the past through written means and the creation of written materials that look to the future so that they can be used as a society's past.' The past is never the subject of disinterested description and analysis, but is always infused with the 'presence of the now', to use Walter Benjamin's often cited expression, and by such criteria, the use of writing to depict 'history' came relatively late in Mesopotamian history. But even when such matters began to be addressed, it was not by means of strictly historical texts or genres: historical issues never stood alone, but were always embedded in a multifaceted discursive matrix that is not always easy to disentangle.

The first known Mesopotamian writings are preserved on approximately five thousand clay tablets discovered in the city of Uruk, dating from around 3200 BC. The writing system, known to moderns as proto-cuneiform, was invented

exclusively for accounting purposes, although roughly 15 per cent of the tablets consist of word lists; that is, of materials that were used for teaching purposes, so that the system had a built-in form of instruction to ensure its survival over more than one generation. Proto-cuneiform spread quickly and was soon used in other cities, but lacunae in archaeological knowledge prevent us from tracing its development over the next few centuries. There are still debates about the very nature of proto-cuneiform as, although we can understand these texts, there are disagreements about translation, and even about the language that presumably underlies them. There can be little doubt, however, that none of these texts contains any complex narrative, nor was the system capable of transmitting such messages.

As in the earliest Egyptian writing system, many of the five thousand or so proto-cuneiform signs were pictographic; that is, they were simplified depictions of the nouns that they represented. But unlike hieroglyphics, the Mesopotamian signs, which were inscribed on clay with a reed stylus, soon lost their representational aspects and became purely abstract, losing all resemblance to their referents. As a result, cuneiform writing occupied a different social and symbolic space from artistic depictions, and while some monuments could include writing as well as images, they were never organically linked, as they were in Egypt.

EARLY DYNASTIC WRITINGS (2700–2350)

Seven hundred years later, around 2600, cuneiform had spread to other areas of the Near East, and the first literary texts appear in the archaeological record, inscribed on clay tablets found in cities located in southern and northern Mesopotamia as well as in Syria. This was a time of relatively independent polities—often described as 'city-states'—that coexisted in constantly shifting political relationships; alliances and wars came and went but, except for some ephemeral attempts at creating larger polities, these kingdoms usually encompassed one or two major urban centres and their surrounding rural territories. Most, if not all, of these Early Dynastic literary texts are poetic in form and mythological in content, as far as one can presently determine. Many of these poems are fragmentary, and few can be understood with confidence, but nothing suggests that any of them are directly concerned with human affairs. Time is referenced, but it is purely mythological: many poems begin in primeval times, at the moment when the heavens and the earth were separated, and continue with narratives that concern gods and goddesses, before humans came to be. There is one exception to this: a fragment of a story about a tryst between a goddess and a man by the name of Lugalbanda, who was, in later tradition, the hero of an epic poem that mingles human and divine affairs, and would also become a king of the city of Uruk.

In addition to administrative and literary clay tablets, in Early Dynastic times writing was also first used for inscribing votive and funerary objects, such

as statues, stone and clay vessels, cones, disks, mace-heads, swords, spear-points, lamps, plaques, bricks, beads, and cylinder seals. The writings on these objects range from single lines that register only a personal name to longer dedicatory inscriptions, and while most of the names are those of rulers, a small number belong to royal wives, relatives, divine servants, or other elite members of society. The main problem in evaluating these inscriptions is chronological: it is almost impossible to discern where to place many of these texts within the 250 or so years of the Early Dynastic period (2700–2350). Within this large corpus one can distinguish a series of rough groupings. Many of these inscriptions are dedicatory, recording the name of the person who presented an object to a divinity. Others mark the property of kings, and such objects are often found in funerary contexts, and only in a few cases the property of a temple. A small number of inscriptions mark the achievements of rulers, either the building or rebuilding of monumental buildings, mostly temples or military victories. Finally, there are metal as well as stone tablets, as well as inscribed figurines, that carry royal inscriptions, which functioned as foundation deposits. All of these are witnesses to a new use of writing: the identification of the names of individuals and of their deeds, be they cultic, administrative, or military in nature.

There is no substantive or typological distinction between the earliest inscriptions that record building activities and those that add information about military victories; indeed, the latter are simply added to records of pious construction. The common denominator in all these texts is the preservation of memory on durable materials such as metal or stone. Southern Mesopotamia is completely lacking in sources of metal, and has no rock formations except for limestone, and thus, in addition to durability, these objects also carry the additional message of hard-to-obtain prestige items. One can therefore be certain that the surviving sample is but a small percentage of what was actually created, preserved in random fashion by chance, as most of such items would have been looted and reused in antiquity. For such reasons, much of our knowledge of early royal inscriptions derives from later scribal copies from monuments, or from objects looted by foreign armies and kept as trophies in places such as the Iranian city of Susa, where they were discovered by modern archaeologists. It is difficult to assess the statistical value of the surviving sample of commemorative inscriptions from early times, but it seems quite certain that by the end of the third millennium commemorative writing on permanent media was ubiquitous in temples, on graves, and possibly in public spaces as well.

In a society of highly restricted literacy, the intended audience of commemorative and monumental texts and representations is important in the context of a discussion of history writing. Because so many of these objects were recovered from secondary contexts, it is difficult to establish just how accessible they were for contemporary eyes. Inscriptions on grave goods and foundation deposits, as well as on such hidden architectural elements as door pivot stones, were unequivocally written with the divine world and future generations in mind. Much the same can be said about statues and stelae that adorned temple rooms and courtyards,

as these were not accessible to many. How many monuments were erected in more public spaces, addressed to contemporary audiences, is difficult to establish for the earlier periods of Mesopotamian history.

THIRD MILLENNIUM HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

In the light of what we know today we can trace the development of writing on monuments and votive objects for purposes of preserving a record of complex events in one place only: the polity of Lagash during the last century and a half of the Early Dynastic period. Various texts discovered in the two main urban centres of the state, Girsu and Lagash, document the deeds of nine kings who ruled in direct succession, most of them related, and are therefore considered a dynasty. Inscriptions from the time of the first king of this dynasty, Ur-Nanshe, record numerous building activities, but some of them also note that he imported timber from foreign lands. Unlike earlier kings, he combined his achievements on inscriptions, listing them in various formats, creating texts that refer not only to the moment, but also to other times; moreover, in addition to building activities, he records the installation of a priestess by divination—the kind of act that later kings would celebrate in year-names—and, in one case, offers the first elaborated description of military conflict. Ur-Nanshe proclaims that he went to war against two other polities, Ur and Umma, and then he briefly notes the names of the captured leaders and their officers, who were apparently put to death. The text is inscribed on a stone slab, but it was most probably a model or a practice exemplar for a larger monument that included depictions of some of the events, including representations of the enemy captives. Fragments of such stelae from the period have survived, albeit without any writing.

The Ur-Nanshe war description began a new chapter in Mesopotamian writing. All of his successors would continue to elaborate narratives of a seemingly perpetual border conflict with Umma, and the best and most extensive example of this is a stone bas-relief from the time of the third king of the Lagash dynasty, Eanatum, which depicts the king leading his army into battle and the god Ningirsu holding an enormous net filled with captives from Umma, as well as vultures circling with heads of dead soldiers in their beaks. This monument, known as the Stele of the Vultures, is inscribed with a long description of a victorious war with Umma, but this series of events is book-ended by two accounts that bear witness to a new conception of time and narrative: at the outset Eanatum ascribes the roots of the current conflict to earlier days, referring to the reign of his father, and perhaps even to events that took place during the tenure of his grandfather, Ur-Nanshe, and at the end he claims other victories over polities in Sumer as well as in the highlands and valleys of neighbouring Iran; that is, in the areas that were the sources of many of Mesopotamia's luxury goods. In this manner the Stele of the Vultures takes a step beyond the commemoration of a specific event

and situates it in a larger military and temporal context. Eanatum also invokes the main divinities of the Sumerian pantheon as his protectors, and thus lays claim to legitimization beyond the borders of his own state, linking military might with pan-Mesopotamian religious authority. While this text invokes history for present purposes, there are indications that the objective is to preserve information and political claims for the future as well, as suggested by the choice of the stone as the medium. One of the elements of the inscription is a curse on any future ruler of Umma who might be tempted to renege on the final agreement that established the border between the two states. Other texts from his time suggest, more directly, that the monuments were indeed inscribed with future generations in mind. There are numerous bricks, stone boulders, clay vessels, and other objects from the reign of Eanatum that announce his many military exploits, and at least one of them ends with a curse warning any future king who might attempt to damage or destroy his inscription.

Such votive and commemorative inscriptions, inscribed on a variety of objects, seem to have been ubiquitous in the Lagash state for approximately 150 years, and when military exploits are mentioned they are primarily concerned with the ever-erupting border disputes with Umma. The end to all of this was dictated by events that encompassed a larger political scope. Around 2350 BC a military leader by the name of Lugalzagesi managed to conquer much of southern Mesopotamia; he made Uruk the capital of his new kingdom, but also reigned at Umma, from where he launched an attack on the Lagash state. The century-and-a-half series of historical texts ends with a unique tablet from the time of Urukagina; after listing all the shrines plundered by the enemy, the lament concludes: 'Since the Ummaite, having plundered Lagash, has committed a sin against divine Ningirsu, the hands that that reached out (to do his deed) will be cut off! This is not the sin of Urukagina, king of Girsu, but Lugalzagesi, king of Umma, his goddess Nidaba will make him forever carry his guilt (for these deeds)!' [1]

The Lagash historical inscriptions are unique for their time, but it is possible that similar writings existed elsewhere but have not survived or been recovered to this day. Different in tone and content, but indicative of broader political intentions, as well as of a new intensity of self-representational strategy, is an inscription of the very Lugalzagesi who had put an end to the independence of both Lagash and Umma. This text was written on at least fifty stone vessels dedicated to the god Enlil in Nippur, and it claims, for the first time, divinely bestowed dominion over Sumer and its major urban centres. The intended audience for all of this is a matter of interpretation: texts in sacred spaces were aimed at the gods, and some public display inscriptions were never really meant to be read by contemporaries, the vast majority of whom were illiterate, but were a

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[1] Jerrold S. Cooper, *Presargonic Inscriptions* (New Haven, 1986), 79.

manifestation of control over the written word. Most important for our purposes, however, is the fact that many, if not all, of these display texts were also directed towards future generations, assuring the survival of the memory of names and deeds of kings and elites.

THE SARGONIC 'EMPIRE' (2334–2113)

Lugalzagesi's expanded kingdom did not last long, as he as well as the governors and rulers of other Mesopotamian polities were all defeated by another warlord by the name of Sargon. The latter came from a hitherto obscure city named Agade, which was probably located on the Tigris River not far from present-day Baghdad. Sargon and his successors ended the rule of independent city-state polities and ruled a territorial state that encompassed much of the area of what is now Iraq, as well as outposts in Syria and Iran, during what is called the Sargonic or Old Akkadian Period (2334–2113). Their armies marched far beyond the effective borders and frontier regions of the realm, reaching the Mediterranean in the west and the ends of the Persian Gulf in the south. Records of these raids and conquests were depicted on stone stelae, which were often inscribed with accounts of the events. Similar inscriptions adorned statues of the Sargonic kings, made from pillaged materials. Few complete originals of such monuments have survived, but we know the inscriptions from copies made by a few scribes living in the eighteenth century, mostly from the city of Nippur. The Sargonic royal inscriptions provide dry accounts of cities plundered, numbers of killed and captured soldiers, and even of routes of campaigns. Unlike the Lagash inscriptions, they do not delve into the past but are resolutely focused on current events. Moreover, the agency behind events is decisively human; the divine world is invoked, to be sure, but the main actors are the Sargonic kings and their soldiers; the net of the god Ningirsu, so prominent in the Stele of the Vultures, would be out of place in this new world in which programmatically cruel human military might is the focus of representation. The monuments of this time proclaim the unstoppable progress of Akkadian armies, resulting in crushed or bound enemy bodies symbolizing the universal hegemony of the new state, anticipating by millennia the 'calculated frightfulness' of the Assyrian kings, to invoke A. T. Olmstead's felicitous phrase.[2]

Three innovations stand out in this period. The Sargonic kings considered themselves to be masters of the universe, not just of Mesopotamia, and so they left permanent memorials to their deeds carved on stelae in the lands they conquered, as evidenced by one example found near Pir Hüseyn in what is now eastern Turkey. Second, their royal writings provided straightforward, unembellished

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[2] A. T. Olmstead, 'The Calculated Frightfulness of Ashur Nasir Apal', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 38 (1918), 209–63.

accounts of conquests, progressing from place to place with concrete details, including numbers of slain soldiers, as well as names of captured and killed enemy leaders. They were also explicit in directing their stories to future generations, ensuring that the written documentation of their accomplishments would keep the memory of their deeds alive for all time. Many of their inscriptions end with curses that warn against erasing their names from the texts. There are different versions of these curses, but the most common one reads: 'whosoever should erase my inscription, may the gods X and Y tear out his foundation and pluck out his seed.' There are differing ways of interpreting this, but there can be no doubt of the main import of the consequences, that the offender will have no descendants, and therefore no one to perform funerary offerings and keep his name alive after death. In concrete fashion, the metaphor demonstrates that words on stone were to be like children that preserve the memory of their father after his demise. Moreover, these curses differ significantly from the few earlier examples, which predict a bad reign for the transgressor, and not erasure from history.

The third Sargonic innovation that is pertinent to our story is the use of year-names to date administrative documents. Although a few earlier examples survive from the town of Nippur, it is only with the reign of Sargon that such a method of dating begins to be used more generally, although it must be admitted that under the kings of Akkad only small numbers of texts actually bear a year name. The formulae celebrate military victories ('the year in which Sargon destroyed (the land of) Arawa'), temple construction ('the year that the temple of [the goddess] Ishtar was (re)built in Akkad'), and the selection of sacred temple personnel ('the year that the high priestess of [the god] Enlil was chosen by omens').[3] One would think that the decision to celebrate specific events in such dating formulae for a whole year on everyday administrative documents reflected decisions that conformed to a system of royal self-representational strategies, and were not simply random. From later times we have lists of such year-names. Conjoined in sequences these create narratives that can be read as historical texts. The first creators of the Sargonic formulae may have had more time-specific goals in mind, although as the habit of naming years developed, the formulae may have been assigned for future legacy as well as for current self-glorification.

After a century and a half of hegemony, the Old Akkadian state collapsed and the political landscape of Mesopotamia reverted to local rule. Some cities remained independent, but overlords from Iran governed others, in both the north and south of Babylonia. The chronology of this sparsely documented historical phase—known as the Gutian Period—is a matter of debate, with opinions ranging from as little as forty to more than a hundred years. Eventually, a king of Ur by the name of Ur-Namma (2112–2095) brought much of the old core of the Akkad kingdom under his control and created the foundations of a new territorial state.

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[3] Douglas R. Frayne, *Sargonic and Gutian Periods, 2334–2113 BC* (Toronto, 1993), 8, 85.

THE THIRD DYNASTY OF UR (2112–2004)

In early Mesopotamian historiography, the Third Dynasty of Ur occupies a singular place. The kings of Ur, like their Akkadian predecessors, lay claim to universal dominion, even if their power covered only the Mesopotamian lowlands, the valleys that led east into Iran—that is, the Diyala and Susiana—and an ever shrinking and expanding area in the Iranian foothills and in some of the neighbouring highlands. The use of year-names and commemorative inscriptions was maintained as in earlier times, but literature was also harnessed for self-representational and historical purposes. Hardly any literature from Old Akkadian times has survived, and therefore comparison is difficult, but all indications are that the Ur III crown exercised direct control over literary production, resulting in an almost total erasure of earlier creations, and the hitching of poetry to contemporary royal concerns. New forms and genres, such as royal hymns, proclaimed the magnificence and imperial might of the new regime. Although few extensive royal inscriptions from the time have been discovered to date, their existence is known to us from copies made by later scribes, as was the case with the Old Akkadian monuments.

One such collection, compiled from monuments by a scribe in eighteenth-century Nippur, demonstrates that the Ur III kings continued the Old Akkadian tradition of illustrated inscribed victory stelae, but it also documents the close relationship between inscriptions and year formulae.[4] This is most important for the period, since in Ur III times almost every single administrative text—and more than eighty thousand have been published to date—was dated by day, month, and year. The collection under discussion contains copies of inscriptions from the reign of Shu-Sin, the fourth ruler of the dynasty, that describe military events as well as the fashioning of votive objects of the gods. These were the same actions that served as the topics of his year-names, in the very same order as in the collection. Some have suggested that Sumerian royal hymns were likewise associated with the promulgation of year-names, but this is far from certain at present. But even if one does not grant that premise, it is apparent that the Ur III state utilized a complex, integrated programme of political messages aimed at the literate bureaucracy and the elites, exploiting different media, including public and private ceremony, monuments, inscriptions, year-names, and a whole range of poetic compositions designed for performance as well as for use in the schooling of future bureaucrats. The depiction of important royal achievements thus served several intertwined functions: it was meant to impress contemporary as well as future audiences, but its future orientation was

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[4] M. Civil, 'Šū-Sîn's Historical Inscriptions: Collection B', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 21 (1967), 24–38.

also meant to symbolize the eternal nature of the Ur III state and of its divine kings, whose dynasty would continue to rule supreme for all time.

The gods had other plans, however, and after a century of hegemony, the Ur III kingdom collapsed, as armies from the east overran the capital of Ur, and new principalities rose to take its place. The time that followed is described, in modern terminology, as the Old Babylonian period (2003–1595). This epoch lasted approximately four hundred years, and except for a short period of unity under the yoke of Babylon it was a time of competing power centres. Many royal inscriptions of the time are markedly more complex than those that came before, and the genre developed in a variety of ways under different dynasties. Some of these trends took the form in bold new directions, while others were more traditional, reverting to patterns of the past. On the periphery of Mesopotamia, in the Iranian highlands, rulers of small local kingdoms bordered mountainside relief carvings with inscriptions, in direct imitation of Old Akkadian models, symbolically invoking the past to impress the future.

When Hammurabi of Babylon (1793–1750 BC) managed to gain control over southern and northern Babylonia, his new imperial notions found expression in his inscriptions, most notably in the monumental Law Code that was inscribed on stelae erected in the main cities of his kingdom. It is generally now agreed that the famous Law Code was hardly a piece of legislation in the modern sense, but an elaborate royal inscription that, by means of its 282 casuistic legal precepts, demonstrated an ideal of justice that was in the purview of the great monarch. The concept of Hammurabi as a king of justice was reinforced by a representation carved at the very top, which showed the monarch receiving symbols of royal power from Shamash, the sun god, whose main purview was justice itself. The long narrative prologue that precedes the 'laws' may have originated as a separate inscription, but its function in the overall composition of the text is clear: it narrates the divine decision to make Babylon the centre of the universe and to bestow it, and its king Hammurabi, with universal dominion. The king, writing in first person, then justifies such claims by listing his deeds on behalf of the main urban centres of his realm, their temples, gods, and peoples. In a long epilogue, Hammurabi warns anyone who would attempt to appropriate his stele, adding: 'may my name be remembered favourably for all time in Esagil temple (in Babylon) which I love.'[5] He then invites anyone who has been wronged to come before the monument and to have the words of the stele read aloud to him, so that he can obtain justice and praise the king who wrote them. These words were intended to stand for ever, as further guaranteed by the longest early Mesopotamian set of curses against anyone who would wish to erase or change the king's words and image.

Hammurabi's kingdom began to crumble soon after his death, and his son Samsuiluna had to face a rebellion that encompassed most of southern Babylonia.

[5] Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (2nd edn, Atlanta, 2000), 134.

The inscriptions of this king document his brutal quelling of the uprising as well as campaigns against other enemies, and in some of these texts one can detect a conscious invocation of older models, particularly those of Naram-Sin, Sargon's grandson, whose inscriptions describe, time and again, victory over a major rebellion that threatened the overthrow of his kingdom. Other Old Babylonian dynasties took a different approach to monumental writing. At Larsa, a city that controlled a substantial territory until its defeat by Hammurabi, inscriptions were composed in a highly poetic style that blurred generic distinctions between hymns and monumental texts. Indeed, there are similar examples from cities such as Isin, where texts that we would characterize as hymns were inscribed on stelae.

THE POETICS OF HISTORY

This short survey has, until now, focused on early Mesopotamian royal inscriptions and year-names, but as important as these are, they are only part of the story of the history-writing of the times. The other locus of such discourse is to be found in the Sumerian-language literary texts of the late third and early second millennia. As already noted, the literary stream of tradition was reinvented under the kings of Ur, who discarded most of the earlier Sumerian mythological poetic corpus and replaced it with a highly politicized set of texts that reflected the ideological concerns of the state, centred on the person of the king. These new texts constituted the core of a literary tradition that was sifted and redacted over the next two centuries; some texts were discarded, new ones added, and all of them were rewritten to conform to eighteenth-century grammatical and orthographic norms. Only a few dozen Ur III manuscripts of such texts have been found to date, and the majority remain unpublished. They are known to us mainly in copies made by students in Old Babylonian schools, primarily from the cities of Nippur, Ur, and Sippar, but also from a handful of other places.

There is a temporal disjunction in the documentation, as we cannot establish the changes that took place between the end of the Ur III period and the eighteenth-century school copies. Thus, all interpretation must take into account the alterity of the copies and their multiple functions as witnesses to older traditions as well as to contemporary Babylonian concerns and reinterpretations. Since so many of the Old Babylonian literary texts originated in earlier times, it is a matter of discretion and interpretation as to which should be considered part of writing history. Must we see all of the thirty or so hymns associated with Ur III kings as witnesses to a concern for history? One cannot rule out such an approach, but to do so would extend this survey into a major history of Sumerian literature, which could not be accommodated in the limited space available for this chapter. More narrowly, I will focus attention on a small set of four widely copied compositions that are concerned with the interpretation of critical historical events of the Ur III dynasty, as well as the fall of Akkad. All of them go back,

in some form, to Ur III times or slightly later, and can be studied as documents of their time, but when read together in aggregate as Old Babylonian compositions, they tell a new story that sheds light on how eighteenth-century Mesopotamians thought of their past and how they meditated on the mechanism of history. In the discussion that follows I have listed them by their modern names. The ancients referred to them by first line only.

1. SUMERIAN KING LIST (SKL)

The text that is often considered as the paradigmatic early Mesopotamian historical text is the Sumerian King List.[6] Like most Sumerian-language literary compositions, it is known from multiple copies made by schoolchildren in the eighteenth century, but the earliest known manuscript is two hundred years older, from the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur, which is probably the time during which it was composed, although some would prefer to ascribe it to the period when Akkad ruled the land.[7] The text begins when kingship was handed down from the heavens. This kingship is granted to only one city at a time, in sections that contain a list of rulers of the city over a specific period, with year counts for individual reigns as well as summaries for each dynastic turn. Some versions begin with seven cities that ruled before the great flood, and then, after the deluge had swept over the land, continue with new dynasties. The earliest kings have fantastically long reigns, but as historical time approaches, the numbers become more realistic: the progress of numbers marks a conscious advancement from myth to history.

Although it is simply a list, the SKL, more than any other early Mesopotamian composition, creates a sense of deep historical time and locates the present in a long mundane stream of hegemony and power. As a historical source it is of little value, at least as far as early periods are concerned, because this is a text that is firmly rooted in the fictional notion of Mesopotamia as a single, unified polity that was always ruled from one city by one king who belonged to a specific dynasty. This is the vision of the state as seen from the vantage point of Akkad and Ur. As far as we know, in the time before 1500, such unity covered no more than 300 years in aggregate; the SKL describes an imperial ideal rather than an actual state of affairs in the land, and therefore constitutes a perfect example of the use of history for the purposes of legitimating politics of the present rather than as a disinterested depiction of the past.

In the SKL the notion of a single unified hegemonic state is projected into the past, erasing the history of small independent contemporary polities. In the native

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[6] Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (Chicago, 1939).
[7] P. Steinkeller, 'An Ur III Manuscript of the Sumerian King List', in W. Sallaberger, K. Volk and A. Zgoll (eds.), *Literatur, Politik und Recht in Mesopotamien: Festschrift für Claus Wilcke* (Wiesbaden, 2003), 267–92.

languages this concept is encapsulated by the Sumerian term *bala*, Akkadian *palû*, literally 'turn', as in the way a spindle goes round and round. The idea is not unique to the SKL, and is expressed in more explicit ways elsewhere. One such text is the Sumerian Sargon Legend, which is an eighteenth-century composition that describes the rise to power of the founder of the Dynasty of Akkad. According to this tale, Sargon had served as a cupbearer at the court of the king of the city of Kish, which was the reigning polity of the time. The 'legend' is incomplete, but one critical passage explains the thinking that drives the narrative (Sumerian Sargon Legend 5'–8'):[8]

> So that the house of Kish, (which had been) like a haunted town,
>   would be turned back into a (proper) settlement,
> Its king, shepherd Ur-Zababa,
> Rose like the sun over the House of Kish.
> (But) An and Enlil, by their holy command, authoritatively [ordered]
> That his royal reign (*bala*) be alienated, that the palace's *prosperity* be
>   removed.

Kingship may have come down from the heavens, but the imperial 'turn' is clearly associated with the two principal gods of the pantheon, An and Enlil. There is some evidence that this concept was not only enshrined in literature, but was part of a more broadly shared ideology, as witnessed by a unique document from the time of the penultimate king of the Old Babylonian dynasty of Babylon, Ammiṣaduqa, that contains a prayer to be offered as part of the royal cult of the dead. The invocation is addressed to the dead ancestors of Ammioeaduqa's lineage, as well as to those of other contemporary reigning groups, all of which are described with the term *bala*.[9]

2. CURSE OF AGADE (CA)

This motif is taken over by the Curse of Agade, an elaborate poem that describes the fall of the Old Akkadian state, which begins with the words (lines 1–7):[10]

> After Enlil's frown (of displeasure)
> Had slaughtered Kish, as if it were the Bull of Heaven,
> Had ground the House of the Land of Uruk like a mighty bull,
> And when at that time upon Sargon, king of Akkad,
> Enlil, from north to south,
> Had bestowed sovereignty and kingship,
> Then …

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[8] Jerrold S. Cooper and Wolfgang Heimpel, 'The Sumerian Sargon Legend', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 103 (1983), 67–82.

[9] J. J. Finkelstein, 'Genealogy of the Hammurabi Dynasty', *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 20 (1966), 95–118.

[10] Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore, 1983), 51.

Although the composition was written a century, at the most, after the events it describes, the narrative of the fall of the House of Sargon is pure fiction, since it twists real events in an unrecognizable manner. The action takes place during the reign of King Naram-Sin, when the kingdom was at the apex of its power. We know that his son, Shar-kali-sharri, held the throne for at least seventeen years, followed by at least three or four rulers, and so the dating of the drama is patently false. In the poem Enlil, the main god of Sumer, withdraws and becomes silent, thus taking away his protection of the kingdom. Naram-Sin sees the destruction of his realm in a dream; in desperation he withdraws and is inactive for seven years, in a sense reflecting in the mundane world Enlil's behaviour. The king then seeks omens to rebuild the main shrine of Sumer, dedicated to Enlil, but cannot obtain a favourable answer. In anger, the king of Akkad tears down the temple, and thus enrages Enlil, who sends down the barbarian Gutians from the eastern mountains to put an end to the realm. We know that this description of events is simply false: inscriptions, year-names, and administrative documents from the time of Naram-Sin and of his son and successor Shar-kali-sharri document extensive work on Enlil's temple, which was rebuilt and adorned with precious stones and metals. In the poem this elaborate undertaking is assigned to an earlier reign and reinterpreted as a sacrilegious destructive act.

In the literature of the early second millennium there is a tension between a re-established primeval world order and the often capricious intervention of the gods, primarily that of Enlil. In the divine hierarchy this deity was second in command to the sky god, An, who is less active in worldly affairs. The imbalances created by Enlil are usually set right by An and Enlil in tandem, or by the decision of the seven main deities of the pantheon. In CA, Enlil's whimsical withdrawal of favour from Naram-Sin is presented without any explanation or justification; it simply happens, as in the SKL, signalling the unpredictable nature of history. But this poem adds another narrative element to the chance nature of events: the hubris of a ruler who does not accept, or perhaps does not fully understand, the ways of the gods. From the point of view of history, there are three main problems to be addressed: why was a positive act recast as an impious desecration, what was the meaning of Enlil's seemingly inexplicable actions, and, finally, why was such a rewriting of history acceptable to readers who might have been well aware of the actual history of Akkad's fall?

3. THE DEATH OF UR-NAMMA (DU)

In the historical vision represented by SKL, the Akkad dynasty was followed by a period of disorder, when 'who was king, who was not king?', and then foreigners with strange names, known in Old Babylonian time as Gutium, ruled the land. Such people and their kings are attested in contemporary inscriptions and documents, as are local rulers in places such as Lagash and Umma, but all of them are

ignored by SKL. The Gutians were ejected by a king by the name of Utuhegal, but then the composition turns to the next dynasty in its relentless recounting of hegemonic rule: the Third Dynasty of Ur, founded by Ur-Namma. Within a few years the new king created a powerful territorial state, but his reign lasted only eighteen years. For reasons that are still unclear, his demise, which may have resulted from a battle wound, initiated unusually strong symbolic and emotional reactions that motivated the composition of a unique poem, the Death of Ur-Namma (DU).[11] There is nothing like it in Sumerian literature, in which the death of kings appears to be a taboo subject, although the poem has to be read in tandem with a composition about the Death of Gilgamesh, which describes the final moments and burial of an ancient semi-divine king of Uruk who was invoked as a patron figure of the Ur III dynasty and played an important role in the self-representational strategies of Ur-Namma and his successors.

The narrative of the Death of Ur-Namma cannot be fully reconstructed as yet due to a relative paucity of manuscripts, but the general outlines of the story are fairly comprehensible: evil has struck Sumer, as its shepherd has been laid low because the god An, without any explicit reason, has changed his word, and Enlil has deceitfully taken back the fate that he had previously established. All the main gods and goddesses withdraw, leading to calamities throughout the land, as the king lies suffering. The poet cries out: 'Why have they abandoned Ur-Namma, like a broken jar, where he was slaughtered/murdered?' The translation of this crucial line is uncertain, but if we follow this interpretation then we must conclude that he was mortally wounded in battle, or perhaps even in an assassination plot. Ur-Namma is buried and takes the long road to the Netherworld, where he makes offerings to all the divine rulers of his new resting place, but when the funerary wailing of Sumer reaches him there he cries out a long, bitter wail, lamenting his premature demise, ending with a complaint against the gods. Apparently, they should not have taken such a decision without consulting Inana, the goddess of war, and when she finds out about these events she flies into a rage, furious that established norms have been trampled by An and Enlil. It is too late, however, and even Inana cannot bring her shepherd back from the dead.

4. CORRESPONDENCE OF THE KINGS OF UR (CKU)

Enlil's duplicity is also manifest, albeit in an oblique manner, in the Correspondence of the Kings of Ur—a collection of twenty-four letters to and from rulers of the Ur III dynasty.[12] Like the other literary school texts discussed here,

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[11] Esther Flückiger-Hawker, *Urnamma of Ur in Sumerian Literary Tradition* (Fribourg, 1999), 93–182.
[12] Piotr Michalowski, *The Royal Correspondence of Ur: An Epistolary History of an Ancient Mesopotamian Kingdom* (Winona Lake, Ind., 2010).

these are attested in later copies, but unlike SKL and CA, for which Ur III manuscripts also exist, there is not a single exemplar of these letters that is not Old Babylonian in date. As a result, there is a divergence of opinions concerning the genuineness of this correspondence, ranging from claims of total forgery to acceptance of the authenticity of almost all the letters. Moreover, the texts have a complicated redactional history, and not all of them were known in one place at one time. Some of them probably go back to Ur III originals, but it is impossible to gauge the level of rewriting and reinterpretation that took place over the centuries, and therefore their use as historical sources is somewhat dubious; but as witnesses to eighteenth-century notions of history, they are invaluable. Unlike most of the compositions discussed here, with one exception they are written in prose, and their imitation of documentary texts imbues them with both authority and a semblance of verisimilitude that seeks to transcend literariness.

The largest part of the correspondence is ascribed to King Shulgi, Ur-Namma's son and successor. Most of these letters concern the relationship between the monarch and his high vizier, or prime minister, named Aradmu, whose real career, spanning the reign of four kings, can be traced in authentic Ur III documentation. Two sets of letters, one from the time of Shulgi, and one from the reign of his second successor, Shu-Sin, describe problems connected with the construction and maintenance of two separate walls, or lines of fortifications, that were ostensibly built to repel attacks from enemy tribes from the east, but which were in fact primarily intended for offensive purposes. Some of the information provided by these letters is quite precise. Little of it can be directly substantiated from Ur III materials, but what there is, as well as conjecture derived from circumstantial evidence, does not contradict any of the information contained in these epistles.

The final four letters of CKU, concerning events from the reign of Ibbi-Sin when the Ur III state collapsed and was overrun by enemies from Iran, are the most complex of all the CKU missives. Not only were most of them fabricated long after the fall of Ur, but they also circulated in different versions, some of which have clear further additions. This was a tradition that was constantly in flux. On one tablet of unknown provenance all four missives were copied together to create, in aggregate, something that we might designate, anachronistically to be sure, as a form of epistolary novel. The narrated events all presage the end of Ibbi-Sin's kingdom, but underlying the military and economic issues that are the main topic of the letters is a debate about divine protection and historical intent. The king, trying to convince one of his generals to remain faithful and to reject attempts to lure him into the camp of his opponent, claims that the gods have given him omens signifying that 'my enemy shall be destroyed, he shall be given over to my hand'.[13] The god Enlil has guaranteed Ibbi-Sin's

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[13] Piotr Michalowski, 'How to Read the Liver? In Sumerian', in Ann K. Guinan et al. (eds.), *If a Man Builds a Joyful House: Assyriological Studies in Honor of Erle Verdun Leichty* (Leiden, 2006), 247–58.

victory, and to press the issue home, the king actually describes the features on
the sheep's liver used for this act of divination. This part is a late addition, but it
is important for its uniqueness, as there is no other such description in all of
Sumerian literature; indeed, the technical vocabulary of divination was all
Akkadian in this period, and the scribe had to actually invent equivalent Sume-
rian terminology.

The omen draws unusual attention to itself precisely because the Old Babylo-
nian reader, armed with hindsight, knows that it is wrong on all fronts, because,
as literati were well aware, Ibbi-Sin's realm fell soon after this omen was suppos-
edly sent by the gods and, according to one source, the abandoned king was
carried off in captivity to the land of Anshan in Iran, never to return. This coun-
terfactual historical knowledge, derived from SKL, the Lamentation Over the
Destruction of Sumer and Ur, and other sources, guaranteed a subversive reading
of the CKU, or at least of the part constituted by the Ibbi-Sin correspondence,
and was also motivated by the Old Babylonian omens that associated certain
configurations of the divinatory innards of sheep with Ibbi-Sin and with one
simple message: disaster. The discrepancy between certain parts of the CKU
and the rest of the historical tradition could imply a number of different inter-
pretations: the diviner was wrong or he lied, the king was wrong or he lied, or,
most importantly, the gods deliberately mislead the king of Ur.

5. THE LAMENTATION OVER THE DESTRUCTION
OF SUMER AND UR

This text describes the collapse of the Ur III state in highly dramatic poetic
language, and utilizes the concept of the *bala* to provide an explicit justification
for the change of power in the land, in the words of the god Enlil, addressed to
his son, the moon god, whose city was Ur:[14]

> The judgment of the (divine) assembly cannot be turned back,
> The word of divine An and Enlil knows no overturning,
> Although Ur was given kingship, it was not given an eternal reign (*bala*);
> From time immemorial, since the homeland was founded, until the
>   population multiplied,
> Who has ever seen a reign (*bala*) of kingship that would take precedence
>   (forever)?
> Its kingship's reign (*bala*) has been long, but it had to exhaust itself!

In the texts cited above, issues of history are not addressed directly, but are
played out by means of intertextual allusions and contradictions. More problem-
atic, in this respect, is a set of Sumerian poems that sing of the deeds of three

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[14] Piotr Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (Winona Lake,
Ind., 1989), 59.

legendary kings of the city of Uruk: Emerkar, Lugalbanda, and Gilgamesh. This literary tradition most probably originated in Ur III times, although there is an older poem concerning Lugalbanda, as already mentioned above. There is a handful of Ur III compositions concerning Lugalbanda and Gilgamesh, and it is clear that by Old Babylonian times the tradition had been thoroughly reworked. Nevertheless, it seems more than probable that these texts originated in the context of a broad-ranging project to provide a form of literary legitimization of Ur III royalty. The complexity of this material precludes any discussion within the confines of a brief survey, but two of five Sumerian-language Gilgamesh poems—some would refer to them as epics—are noteworthy in the context of an essay on historical writing: the Death of Gilgamesh as well as Gilgamesh and Huwawa. The former may have been part of a complex ideological project centred on the concept of divine kingship, initiated when Ur-Namma's son Shulgi proclaimed himself a god in the aftermath of a state crisis precipitated by the death of his father. As such, it is related to the composition about the Death of Ur-Namma, discussed above.

The story of Gilgamesh and Huwawa is perhaps more pertinent to our topic: it deals with an expedition to the east, to fell cedars in a land guarded by an enormous supernatural creature called Huwawa, but its motivation is not simply materialistic: it is to 'establish a name'. The semi-divine hero, Gilgamesh, forms his expedition to find glory and immortality by performing deeds that will be remembered for all time, thus defining, in the most explicit terms, the roles of text, memory, and history in early Mesopotamian tradition (Gilgamesh and Huwawa A 5–7):[15]

> I want to enter the mountains; I want to establish my name,
> Where names have already been set down, I want to set down my name,
> Where names have not been yet been set down, I want to set down
> the name of the gods!

While a full discussion cannot be provided here, it is worth noting that the SKL, as well as the poetic historical compositions, functions differently from the 'epic' materials. While the former utilize deep historical time to provide sanction and support for a specific abstract notion of kingship—one that, for lack of a better word, might be termed imperial—the latter use it to legitimate a more narrowly defined concept of divine royal authority.

This poetic historical vision is present in texts that are central to the Old Babylonian educational establishments in cities such as Nippur, Ur, and Isin, but there are also other early Mesopotamian texts that require some comment in this context. Among these are lists of year-names, some covering whole 'dynasties', while others are more limited in scope, though their context and function are less than clear, since only a few of them come from school environments.

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[15] Dietz Otto Edzard, 'Gilgamesh und Huwawa A. I. Teil', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 80 (1990), 183.

They may have been used occasionally in peripheral education, but some of them may bear witness to some form of antiquarian interests. It is unlikely that Old Babylonian scribes compiled these lists from old dated documents, as they would not have known how to arrange them in chronological order, so they must have been based on older versions that have not been recovered. These year lists are important because they transform individual year-names into components of a larger historical narrative, as Hayden White demonstrated many years ago on the basis of similar Old English sources.[16] They tell stories of royal achievements in limited areas of interest, but as narratives they prefigure later chronicle texts.

Old Babylonian scribes also left behind them copies of monumental inscriptions from Old Akkadian and Ur III times, but, as is the case with date lists, this was not part of the central curriculum. Copies of Old Akkadian royal inscriptions have been found among school texts in Nippur and Ur, taken, it would seem, directly from the monuments, as they contain annotations indicating the location of certain captions on statues or stelae. Moreover, the copyists were at pains to imitate the old monumental script and did not render the cuneiform signs in their contemporary Old Babylonian forms. Hardly any traces of the originals have survived, so these copies are important to the modern historian, but it must be stressed that they may have been the work of a few isolated teachers and students and do not represent a general investigative trend of the time. Much the same can be said about Old Babylonian school copies of Ur III inscriptions, mostly limited to a collection of commemorative texts from the time of King Shu-Sin, already mentioned earlier, that were collected by someone in Nippur. The exact spots where these copies were found is unknown, and it cannot be ruled out that they also represent the work of one scribe or the interests of one particular teacher.

LEGENDS OF THE KINGS OF AKKAD

Mesopotamian education of the eighteenth century was almost entirely focused on the classical Sumerian language, which had long ceased to be spoken in the streets. At the same time there is evidence for new literary developments in a poetic version of the Akkadian language, which was the primary spoken tongue of the time. Few of these Akkadian compositions come from excavations, and therefore it is difficult to evaluate their social context, but it seems fairly certain that this new development was still not part of the core traditional educational centres in cities such as Nippur and Ur, even if a handful of Akkadian-language literary texts have been found in these sites as well. Among these new texts there

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[16] Hayden White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', in id., *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987), 1–25.

is a group of compositions that describe the deeds, trials, and tribulations of the two most prominent kings of the Dynasty of Akkad: Sargon and Naram-Sin. This tradition, which may have earlier roots, is extensively elaborated in post–Old Babylonian times, when it is fully integrated into the literary stream of tradition, often acquiring new symbolism and new intertextual meaning.

These new Old Babylonian fictions differ in tone and content from the Sumerian traditions about these two kings that were discussed briefly above. Because the Akkadian compositions are known only in single, usually incomplete manuscripts, it is evident that this was a new literary development that was still in a state of flux and which owed little to past creativity. The Sargon compositions portray him as a vigorous military leader 'beloved of (the war goddess) Ishtar, who roamed throughout the four corners (of the universe)'.[17] Unlike the Sumerian kings, who appear in literature as singular, omnipotent, and sometimes divine supreme monarchs, Sargon is portrayed as a warlord who lives with, and takes advice from, his troops as they plan wars and march to the ends of the world for glory. The texts mention certain real geographical locations, but the accent is on the difficulties encountered in the fulfilling of Sargon's great ambition to achieve what no one has ever done before. In the words that he addressed to his own soldiers: 'Now then, any king who would rival me, wherever I have gone, let him also go!'[18]

The extant material about Naram-Sin is more varied in content and ideologically more complex, but this may be an accident of discovery. The Old Babylonian literary works concerning this king often mix myth and mundane history, extolling his military prowess, but also his all too human destiny. Naram-Sin was worshipped as a god during the last years of his reign, but in the Old Babylonian tradition his mortality is one of the characteristics of his literary persona. This is most prominently displayed in the Elegy on the Death of Naram-Sin—the only early Mesopotamian Akkadian-language portrayal of royal demise, but one that has little in common with the Sumerian poems that describe the death of Ur-Namma and Gilgamesh. (There is also a claim that this composition is to be ascribed to the Old Babylonian king, Naram-Sin of Eshnunna, a relatively minor ruler with grand pretensions.)

Perhaps the most fascinating texts concerning Sargon's grandson are a set of compositions that deal with the Great Revolt. In this case we have a constellation of texts of various types that recycle a set of historical motifs, refracted in the prisms of the literary imaginations of different places and different times. According to copies of authentic Naram-Sin inscriptions, at some time towards the end of his reign he faced a major revolt that threatened to destroy the

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[17] Joan Goodnick Westenholz, *Legends of the Kings of Akkade: The Texts* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1997), 35.

[18] Ibid., 77.

hegemony of Akkad, and at least five different inscriptions describe him as 'Naram-Sin, the mighty one, king of the four corners (of the universe), victor in nine battles in the course of one year'. The threat was so grave that the people of his kingdom pronounced him a god in gratitude for his victory over the rebels, and already in Old Akkadian times this revolt became the stuff of literature, as documented in a fragmentary school text from the period.

Whether in imitation of earlier texts or from a study of royal monuments that were still standing in temple courtyards, Old Babylonian scribes reworked these stories into a set of compositions that contain closely related variations on a common stock of themes. Three such creations survive, all from different cities, and a fragmentary fourth one—almost a coda, one might say—describes how after nine battles, 'for the tenth time they rose up against me!' This particular version ends with a curse formula, and here for the first time we encounter a genre that would be more important in later times: the first-person literary narrative of an ancient king that is couched in the form of a monumental inscription.

The most widely circulated composition concerning Sargon's grandson is the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin or, as it has been renamed by its most recent editor, Naram-Sin and the Enemy Hordes. The Old Babylonian version, while still fragmentary, may have been as long as 600 lines, but the later redactions are more than two-thirds shorter. The first-millennium story, which is complete, is a highly literary creation, filled with references and allusions to other compositions, and highly didactic in tone. It describes how an earlier king, Enmerkar, had offended the gods by not heeding omens and was punished for this; most importantly, he did not leave a written record of his experiences so that future kings, including Naram-Sin, could learn from his example. The king of Akkad had to face an attack by seven other-worldly kings, who had devastated much of the kingdom; much as in the Curse of Agade, Naram-Sin seeks omens, with no result, so he decides to take matters into his own hands and to go on the attack, but the results are disastrous, and none of the tens of thousands of soldiers he sends out against them come back alive. Chastened and despondent, the Akkadian ruler seeks omens once more, and finally receives orders forbidding him from destroying the demonic host, which, it turns out, is one created by the gods for punishment purposes, as they are forever 'at the disposal of the angry heart of Enlil'.

Naram-Sin inscribes the text in stone and places it in a temple for future generations to read, admonishing future monarchs to love their wives and strengthen their kingdoms, but also to 'tie up your weapons and set (them) in the corners!', to ignore any enemies who might ravage their lands, and to follow Naram-Sin's example by adding a written account of their own lives to the one he left behind. In this composition, characters and events from the past are mixed in with mythological and magical traditions to create a new form of literary history in which the hubris of kings is tempered by self-reflection and reluctant subordination to divine will, ending with a surprising renunciation of violence that comes from the mouth of an ancient king whose name is otherwise

a traditional personification of martial ferocity. In the first millennium the paradigmatic status of the written tradition was extolled in many texts, and therefore the admonition to leave written testimony ties into the ethos of the time; but it is not clear how these motifs were developed in the Old Babylonian versions, as these texts are broken in the equivalent moments of the narrative.

The Old Babylonian stories about the Akkad kings carry many messages, but the most salient aspects that stand out are the transient nature of glory and the fragility of royal power based on military might. This contrasts in striking ways with the strident, unequivocal self-representational strategies of kings such as Sargon and Naram-Sin, as they are known to us, as well as to eighteenth-century Mesopotamians, from their original monuments and inscriptions. As history-making, these stories, although seemingly quite different, dovetail with the Sumerian poetic tradition concerning Akkad and the kings of Ur, which concentrates on the aleatoric character of the flow of mundane history and the unpredictability of divine direction of events: the fickle nature of gods like Enlil and the dubious reliability of omens, which are the standard system of communication from the transcendent world. Nevertheless, the contemporary 'establishment' continued to represent violence as a measure of royal success, and even exploited this kind of literary representation by alluding to kings of old in inscriptions and other texts, in which appeal to tradition contributed to legitimization. In Old Babylonian times, schooling, and therefore much of what we consider Sumerian and Akkadian literature, was mostly a private elite affair, as far as we can presently determine, independent of the main institutions of power. It is therefore difficult to establish whether the past, used as a vessel for questioning contemporary norms, functioned as a locus of subversive discourse and as a canvas for questioning the established world view. It is equally possible that for the small number of people who could read and write, the present and the past worked in tandem in a more complex dialectical manner, providing opportunities for communication that escape us, as we search for apparent contradictions detected by modern sensibilities.

For some, historical achievements were but wind. A poem best known from later versions, but which originated in Old Babylonian times (the Ballade of Early Heroes), finds the past ephemeral and of no importance. It enumerates some of the kings from SKL and other Sumerian literary traditions, commenting on the transitional and futile nature of their achievements, and in one version recommending, at the very end, the solace of the Beer Goddesses' embrace.[19]

> Where is King Alulu, who reigned 36,000 years?
> Where is King Etana, the man who ascended to the heavens?
> Where is Huwawa, who was captured in … ?

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[19] This text exists in a number of redactions from various times. For an edition, see Bendt Alster, *Wisdom of Ancient Sumer* (Bethesda, Md., 2005), 288–322.

> Where is Enkidu, whose strength…in the homeland?
> Where are those kings, the foremost of days of old?
> They are no longer engendered, no longer born,
> Like the remote heavens, I cannot overtake them,
> Like the deep netherworld, no one can know them,
> Life, in all its form, is but an illusion.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

The dates (all BC), which are approximate at best, correspond to the 'middle chronology', which is the most commonly used scheme at present, although there is a growing consensus that most of the dates must be brought down by more than a century.

4000–3100	Uruk Period
3100–2334	Early Dynastic Period
2334–2154	Akkad (Sargonic) Period
2112–2004	The Third Dynasty of Ur
2003–1595	Old Babylonian Period

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Chapter 2

Later Mesopotamia

Mario Liverani

It has been said and repeated that there is no Babylonian or Hittite word that we could translate as 'history', but this does not imply that the inhabitants of the ancient Near East had no idea of history, much less no concept of the past or the passing of time. To be sure, the reconstruction of past events as a purely intellectual exercise, devoid of any practical implication and devoted to ascertaining the truth, was not a priority for the ancient Mesopotamian scribes. But a recurrent concern with history is evident in a variety of textual typologies—from royal inscriptions to king lists, from wisdom literature to legal documents—always directly linked with practical purposes, mainly in the realm of religion and politics. Indeed, this was a central topic of social communication.

We can divide this concern into three branches, corresponding to three main tasks of the ruling elite—the king, and the scribes organically dependent on his will. The first task was to compose history—contemporary history—by selecting the interpretations of recent events that were most suitable to the interests of the ruler, and then disseminating these interpretations to the population. The second task was to confront past events and figures which were part of the common memory in a given society. Positive models were mostly located in a remote past, close to the mythical age when the cosmos was functioning well (even though negative events, even catastrophes, also happened in the remote past). The more recent past was more often a negative phase of crisis and even collapse, of corruption and unlawfulness, quite fit to underscore by way of contrast the merits of the actual ruler who put an end to the negative interlude and restored the original order. The third task—the most ambitious but also most problematic—was to predict the future by discovering in history those regularities, or simply those 'signs', that could help people face future crises, or at least teach them the best behaviour in their situation.

This schematic pattern could apply to the entire history of Mesopotamia (both in the early periods covered by the previous chapter, and the late periods covered by the present one). Yet the length of the period and the regional diversities of the area compel us to proceed by chronological sub-periods, by regions, and by textual genres. Nevertheless, readers should keep in mind the three aspects outlined above, in order to assess their variable burden in each historical setting.

THE MID SECOND MILLENNIUM TRANSITION

The history of ancient Mesopotamia is characterized by a rather slow change in political institutions, religious ideas, legal procedures, technology, and culture. Inside such a basic continuity, the turning point at the end of the seventeenth century is of special relevance. Among the various features of this important transition—stretching from settlement patterns to social structure, from technology to royal ideology—some had a notable effect on the forms in which history was reconstructed and used in the current political discourse. Memory of the past had always been formalized (in specific textual genres) in response to the problems affecting the political and cultural environment in which the texts were composed. The change in political relationships brought about a change in history-writing, and the most notable change was the one affecting the spatial dimensions of the overall political scenery.

During the previous centuries, Lower Mesopotamia (first Sumer, then Babylonia) had been the centre of the world, with the surrounding countries being a true and proper 'periphery'. Of course 'periphery' is a subjective concept, a perspective more than a reality. Sumerians and Babylonians viewed the surrounding countries as valuable sources of raw materials, 'empty lands' put by the gods at their disposal, lands definitely barbarian and lacking civilization. This subjective view had its sound bases, however: every parameter that we can conceive—from a concentration of people and agricultural production, through urbanization and state organization, to the use of writing and administrative archives—would result in a neat centrality of Lower Mesopotamia within the frame of its larger Near Eastern context. Even countries like Elam, Upper Mesopotamia, and Northern Syria, which had hosted highly developed states since the mid third millennium, always remained 'peripheral' in respect to the acknowledged centre of the world, where state administration, officialdom, and writing originated.

With the sixteenth-century transition, the scenery changed. Babylonia started her long-term crises in demographic levels and in agricultural production, which are revealed in the archaeological record by a decrease of settlements and a disruption of the irrigation network. On the other hand, the surrounding countries completed their long path toward a political dimension that could compete with Babylonia as equals. The intervention of Egypt in the Levant, the unification of Upper Mesopotamia in a powerful state (first Mitanni and later Assyria), and the unification of Central Anatolia under the Hittite kingdom, were the major factors leading to a new international order. The Hittite sack of Babylon *c.* 1600 can be seen as a symbolic event (and a symbolic date) for the dramatic change in political relations.

The new order, whose roots had already been formulated in the Old Babylonian period, was formalized by a mutual acknowledgement among half-a-dozen 'great kings': independent sovereigns dominating a multitude of 'small kings' in a relationship of master to servant. The 'great kings' were those of Egypt,

Babylonia, Elam, Mitanni and later Assyria, and Hatti (the Hittites). The 'balance of power' between great kings, which characterizes the period *circa* 1600 to 1200 (the Late Bronze in archaeological terms), and also the 'unbalance of power' between great and small kings, the result of the respective demographic and economic resources and of their military power, was formally conceived and expressed according to legal conventions. The issue of a war was decided by the gods ('ordeal by battle'), as in a tribunal session, according to the right and wrong of the contending parties. The feuding parties had to demonstrate the superiority of their claims by adducing 'historical' proofs; that is, by narrating a sequence of events in which they were right and their enemies were the villains in the story. Usually we have the version of the winner, but our cynical appreciation (whoever wins becomes right) is the reverse of ancient ideology (whoever is right will win), based on the theological presumption that the gods could not let the wrong party prevail.

Another feature of Late Bronze historical writing is dependent on a peculiar technological innovation—one that came into being in the Near East around 1600 (from Iran or ultimately from Central Asia): the breeding and training of horses to draw the light chariots used in hunting and warfare. The chariot-fighters became a privileged social class, maintained by the royal palace through an allotment of landed properties and servants. Until Old Babylonian times, battles were fought and won by foot soldiers (peasants in corvée duty); after 1600, victories were won by 'aristocratic' charioteers. The entire social structure changed and the model of kingship assumed 'heroic' features, which became a central motif in the political texts of the time. In addition, a change in the inheritance system (substituting merit for the order of birth) also contributed to the same end, in a society where the leading class was selected by the personal attitudes of force, bravery, and venture.

KASSITE AND MIDDLE BABYLONIAN HISTORICAL TRADITIONS

This loss of centrality brought about a cultural shock in Babylonian culture. Nevertheless, because the prestige of the scribal schools and the literary and religious language (used as contact language in the entire Near East) remained unchanged, the ruling class—the Kassite dynasty of foreign origin—had nothing to boast of, and in fact the royal inscriptions of the time, very simple and monotonous, do not contain any celebration of contemporary history. Even the most banal form of self-celebration, the 'year-names' previously used to denominate each year by its most important event, were abandoned in favour of a simple year number of the current king's reign.

With no present to be proud of, the only resource left was the past. But the alien and rude Kassite kings (of mountaineer provenance) seem to have been uninterested in exploiting the glorious heritage of a remote past, citing instead
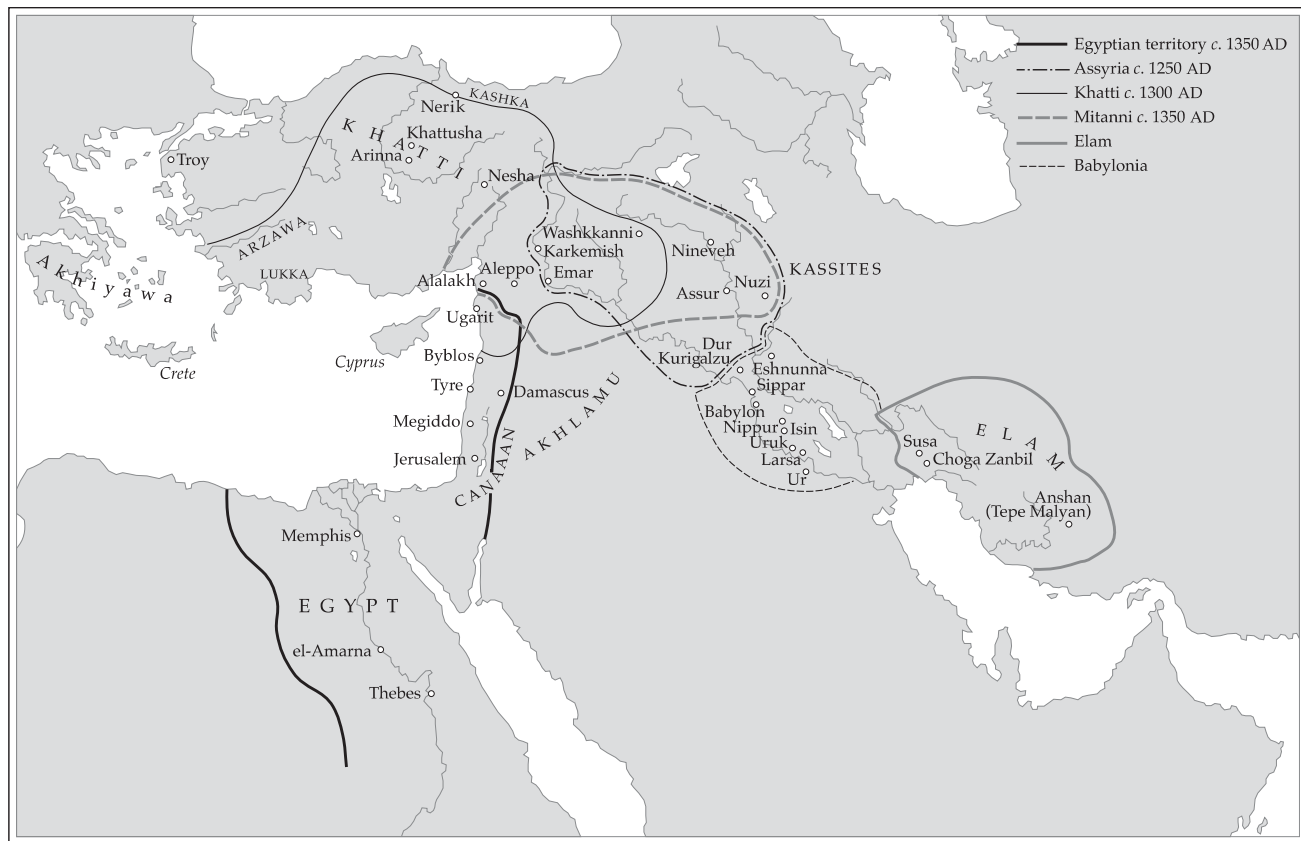
The Near East *c.*1500–1400 BC.

events of a recent past as miserable as the present. When, for instance, the Babylonian king wrote to the Egyptian pharaoh to complain about his willingness to deal with Assyrian merchants, he could find no better arguments than pretending that the Assyrians were his vassals, and that in the past his father had supported Egypt against the Canaanite rebels: two pretensions so obviously false and anachronistic that they had no effect on the pharaoh.

The Babylonian scribes in the crisis period had recourse to the literary elaboration of wisdom themes, especially centred on the search for the reasons for the crisis itself, at the personal level or at the level of the entire community. The motif of the 'righteous sufferer' elaborates the problem of divine justice and divine intervention in human affairs: why is the righteous person affected by evil, although he has committed no sins? The influence of wisdom themes is detectable in literary compositions dealing with the mythical foundations and heroic past of Mesopotamia. Apart from possible 'wisdom' features in the Middle Babylonian redaction of the national Epic of Gilgamesh, transforming the unrivalled hero of the traditional tales into a restless, anti-heroic character, the most evident influence is provided by the Cuthaean Legend of Naram-Sin (also discussed by Piotr Michalowski in this volume). While the Old Babylonian poems about the kings of Akkad underscored their unrivalled value and achievements, as well as their pious relations to the gods, the Cuthaean Legend by contrast presents an anti-heroic story. The Old Babylonian version of the same story does not contain the critical passages, which are preserved in the Standard Babylonian version going back to a late second millennium composition. Naram-Sin, facing the invasion of northern barbarians, enquires at the human level concerning the nature of his enemies, and only afterwards consults the gods. When finally he reads the omens, they are negative. But the king in his hubris decides to do without the support of the gods, fights the invaders by his own forces, and is repeatedly defeated. His too-late repentance cannot help him; instead of heroically fighting against the invaders, he just has to wait barricaded inside the city walls for the invaders to retreat—a wise but anti-heroic precedent for the future kings to whom the text is explicitly addressed.

The legend of Naram-Sin is an important exemplar of a literary genre—the forged stele upon which a famous king of the past is assumed to have inscribed his glorious enterprises as an enduring monument to teach future kings how to behave: 'You, whoever you are, governor or prince or anybody else, whom the gods will call to kingship: I made a tablet-box for you, I inscribed a stele for you. . . . Read this stele! . . . Let wise scribes read to you this inscription! You who have read my inscription and have solved your problems, you who blessed me, may a future (ruler) bless you'.[1] History is a two-way street, with teachings going from the past to the future, and blessings in the opposite direction.

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[1] Joan Goodnick Westenholz, *Legends of the Kings of Akkade* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1997), 326, 330, ll. 149–51, 154, 175–80.

After the repeated sacks of Babylon by the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I (*c.*1225) and by the Elamite king Kutir-Nahhunte (*c.*1160), Nebuchadnezzar I was able to produce a notable, albeit short-lived recovery of Babylonia in political and military power, but above all in religious and cultural values. One basic problem was how to explain the abandonment of Babylon by the national god Marduk, in a sense transposing to state level the motif of the 'righteous sufferer'. In Mesopotamian tradition, since the city is the seat of the local god, the explanation of a destruction is a theological problem: the gods are assumed to have abandoned the city (obviously guilty of some sin), in order to give a free hand to their enemies. In the case of Marduk, the abandonment had been manifest in the abduction of his cult statue by the invaders: first the Hittites, then the Assyrians, and lastly the Elamites. On the one hand, Nebuchadnezzar boasts that his victory over the Elamites allowed for a recapture of the cult statue and its return to Babylon. On the other hand, the Babylonian theologians conceived the idea that Marduk had travelled to the foreign countries of his own free will, in order to propagate his cult and the glory of Babylon.

Roughly at the same date, another product of the Marduk clergy is the so-called Weidner Chronicle, in the form of a literary letter fictitiously attributed to an Old Babylonian king, revisiting the fortunes of the major protagonists of ancient Mesopotamian history by anachronistically connecting them to the cult of Marduk. Those kings who duly provisioned Marduk's temple with fish offerings were rewarded by success and fame; those who appropriated Marduk's fishes for themselves were punished. A trivial quarrel between an unknown king and the clergy of Babylon gave rise to a pretentious reconstruction of the entire history of Mesopotamia, from the mythical times of Agga and Enmerkar, to the fully historical times of Sargon and Naram-Sin and of Ur-Nammu and Shulgi. The desire to celebrate the centrality of Marduk throughout the entire world produced important theological meditations, but also banal parochialism and evident anachronisms.

MIDDLE ASSYRIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY: BUILDINGS AND DEEDS

During the same centuries that saw Babylon retreating on the theological causes of her crisis, the city-state of Assur in Upper Mesopotamia was able to shake off the Mitannian overlordship, and then to constitute a regional kingdom. The rise of Assyria was the result of an astonishing self-confidence and resolution, and of a firm acceptance of a role entrusted by the god Assur to the Assyrian king, his designated manager. Since the beginning, the divine mandate to 'enlarge the kingdom' (explicitly quoted in the enthronement ritual) was the theological basis for an imperialistic policy. The Middle Assyrian kingdom (thirteenth to eleventh centuries) already contains the basic features of the later empire, and

this also applies to forms of history-writing, both in dealing with past history and in celebrating the contemporary rulers.

No writing from Mitanni has survived, with the exception of a few diplomatic letters, but it is reasonable to assume that such a powerful state would have exerted some influence on the historical concepts of its Assyrian subjects. We know, from the apologetic inscription of Idrimi (*c.*1500), a usurper of the throne of Alalakh, a vassal kingdom of Mitanni, and from similar themes in a letter of Tushratta king of Mitanni (*c.*1350), that the narrative of the heroic behaviour of the king was framed in a fairy-tale pattern, and that assessments of the virtue of the king (most evident in the case of a usurper) followed the general trends of the time, which substituted personal bravery for automatic inheritance.

In the Assyrian royal inscriptions, the passing of time and the ups and downs of human fortunes are especially underscored by the vicissitudes of the buildings (temples and palaces), whose foundation or restoration the inscriptions intend to celebrate. When a building had to be restored, the procedure was to take down the old walls, and build them anew in the same place. In so doing, the restorer king could find the inscriptions of the previous restorers and even of the first builder, and he laid down his own tablet beside the old ones. The ephemeral nature of the mud-brick masonry (especially when contrasted with the enduring stone buildings of Egypt), along with the procedure of their restoration, had a notable influence on the 'philosophy of history' of the Mesopotamian peoples: the emergence and collapse of dynasties were conceived on the model of architectural vicissitudes, and the sequence of foundation inscriptions built up a sort of relay from king to king, with the last one restoring the older steles, and the former kings blessing their pious heir. The computation of the distance in time between one intervention and the next was based on the Assyrian King List, updated from time to time. Since the sequence of the Assyrian kings is basically unitary, and the length of reigns exactly recorded, the distances are reliable—quite different from similar calculations in Babylonian inscriptions that used to add parallel dynasties as if they were successive, resulting in time spans that were hugely exaggerated.

But the most interesting sections of Middle Assyrian royal inscriptions are devoted to the celebration of the king's enterprises. These parts became more and more extensive, with the sections devoted to the building process itself consequently marginalized. The celebrated events were mostly military expeditions—vanquished enemies, conquered countries, booty and tribute gathered—and an arrangement by years or by successive campaigns became the standard solution in the longer texts. At the end of the Middle Assyrian period, the Annals of Tiglath-pileser I, inscribed on several foundation prisms from Assur, remained for long the most extensive annalistic record of Assyria (800 lines). The eight campaigns narrated are not numbered by years or identified by eponyms' names. They are simply separated by the king's titles, yet the 'annalistic' intent is already clear.

In the case of Tiglath-pileser's Annals, his enemies are considered peripheral and inferior peoples, and no special attention is paid to justifying the Assyrian's aggressive attitude: the obvious motivation was a divine order 'to enlarge the land of Assur'.[2] The situation is different when it comes to Babylon, at least as recorded in the Poem of Tukulti-Ninurta—a literary text about the conquest of Babylon by Tukulti-Ninurta I (1225). In this case, the religious and cultural prestige of the vanquished country requires a more explicit justification, which follows the theological principles of the time: the defeat of the Kassite king was made possible when the Babylonian gods, responding to his treacherous behaviour, abandoned him. By contrast, the correct and heroic behaviour of the Assyrian king provided him with the support of god Assur. This is the Assyrian interpretation of the events. Nevertheless, a later chronicle reveals the Babylonian interpretation, whereby the impious action of Tukulti-Ninurta was punished by the gods (since the Assyrian king was killed by his son).

The conflicting interpretations of the same event help us to discover, at least in part, the addressees of the celebrative texts. The foundation inscriptions, deeply buried under the corners of the temples and explicitly addressed to the gods and to the future kings, were inaccessible as such to common people. But their content should have been disseminated in oral and ceremonial forms to a national audience in need of being convinced and motivated for further enterprises. However, the Poem had a more direct intent of public information. Not only did the various 'national' audiences require different interpretations, but the various levels of political interest required different forms of indoctrination: the more detailed explanation (entrusted to texts) was intended for scribes, priests, and public officials, while the common people were satisfied by being confident that a strong king, supported by the gods, protected the country and exterminated the evil and dangerous enemies.

HITTITE HISTORIOGRAPHY: TREATIES AND APOLOGIES

We have left Hittite historiography for last because it is less central to the Mesopotamian main tradition, but its development (*c.*1650 to 1200) somewhat anticipated that of Middle Babylonia and of Middle Assyria, and its textual remains are more extensive, more varied, and more properly 'historically minded'. Past generations of scholars connected the historical attitude of the Hittites to their own Indo-European origins (or, more to the point, their language). Such an explanation is obviously to be discarded as influenced by ideological (even racist) presumptions; even if we conceded that a 'Proto-Indo-European' culture existed somewhere in prehistoric times, its culture could not have included an attitude

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[2] K. F. Müller, *Das Assyrische Ritual*, I (Leipzig, 1937), 12–13, l. ii 34.

(not to speak of its textual expressions) properly connected with more complex levels of culture and of political organization. The alternative suggestion seems obvious: that the Hittites were historically minded because they were especially concerned with the legal motivation of their political actions, both inside their kingdom and on the international scene, and such a motivation had recourse to past events in order to establish their own correct behaviour and the treachery of their enemies.

At the very beginning of the Hittite kingdom, Hattushili I provided excellent examples of historical documents concerning both the inner struggle and the external conquests. In his Testament, issued to explain to the court and the people the reasons for designating Murshili (not his son) as his successor, the reasons are set in the recent past: the negative behaviour (treachery, sorcery, rebellion) of the natural candidates to succession convinced the aged king to adopt this extreme solution.[3] The formative process of the kingdom, which in real terms had been one of progressive unification, is here described in terms of disruption and crisis. In his annals, however, the king relates his important campaigns in Syria and in Upper Mesopotamia, and cites the old hero Sargon of Akkad as his forerunner in the eventful enterprise of crossing the Euphrates.[4] Note that the structure of the annals, campaign by campaign, anticipates by half a millennium that of Tiglath-pileser. But while the annalistic account of the Assyrian king was recorded as part of a foundation inscription, the Hittite Annals are independent texts, preserved in archival tablets.

The legal nature of Hattushili's Testament is quite evident, and the same holds true, one century later, for the Apology of Telipinu, a usurper who took the throne at the end of a sequence of bloody deeds inside the royal house. Telipinu, acting as both defendant and judge, argued his case by reminding readers that the entire story of the kingdom had been punctuated by similar misdeeds— kings being killed by order of their sons or sons-in-law—with the entire ruling class being responsible. Hittite history is reconstructed in terms of a perfect original era, when the ruling class was compact and the kingdom flourishing, followed by a phase of disruption and murders, leading to the decline of Hittite power and fortunes. Telipinu, charged as simply another example of a traitor and murderer, proclaims himself the restorer of order—recapitulating the recurrent mythical process from original order, through intermediate chaos, to final cosmic restoration. The pattern is clearly spurious (the idealized early era is the very same period described by Hattushili as chaotic), and the self-interested defence of Telipinu is too transparent. But the use of past history in order to solve a legal case is paradigmatic, and quite effective given the audience.

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[3] For a translation of the entire text, see F. Sommer and A. Falkenstein, *Die hethitisch-akkadische Bilingue des Hattušili I* (München, 1938).

[4] H. G. Güterbock, 'Sargon of Akkad Mentioned by Hattušili I of Hatti', in *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, 18 (1964), 1–6.

Besides the political historiography, Middle Hittite scribes also produced legendary or fairy-tale treatments in the Hurrian language (or in Hittite language but derived from a Hurrian environment) of the recent and glorious history of the Old Kingdom in the Siege of Urshum story and in the Release of Ebla poem. In addition, they translated or adapted into Hittite some Babylonian compositions on the more remote history of the kings of Akkad, especially those stories that were set in the Anatolian region. After one more century of deep crisis, the Hittite state recovered under Tudhaliya I and Arnuwanda I (*c.*1400–1380), and finally ventured on a hegemonic role in the entire Near East with Shuppiluliuma I (*c.*1370–1330). Under these kings and their successors during the so-called Hittite empire (until *c.*1190), the textual genres more expressive of the historical interests are treaties and annals.

The 'vassal treaties' usually start with an historical introduction, which is missing or drastically reduced in the parity treaties. The reason is clear: while the latter (from the Kizzuwatna treaties of the fifteenth century to the famous treaty with Egypt in the mid thirteenth century) were based on a formal parity of rank—one that was mutually acknowledged and therefore in need of no explanation—the former had to demonstrate to the subordinate parties that their rank and role were the result of historical relationships or recent events. To the treaties we can also add the war declarations, with the difference that the treaties were redacted at the end of a warlike encounter and are preserved as full-fledged documents, while the war declarations are generally recorded in the annals in very abridged terms (although the originally preserved Indictment of Madduwatta is quite long and detailed). Furthermore, in the war declarations the purpose is clear: while attacking, the Hittites have to demonstrate that they are not responsible for any misdeeds and that the enemy is the culprit. Therefore the gods will let the Hittites win and the enemies will be defeated. When the encounter is over, the same principles will be put forward in the historical introduction to the treaty of vassalage.

The most elaborate historical introduction is found in the Shunashshura treaty, where the Hittite king (Tudhaliya I) had to convince the king of Kizzuwatna to be downgraded from a 'great' to a 'small' king. In the juridical section he is still his peer, according to the old tradition, but a few details are introduced whereby the relationship comes out as one of inequality. In the historical introduction, the argument about the downgrade of Kizzuwatna is addressed, not to Kizzuwatna itself, but to the Mitanni who were the former overlords of the contended country. The argument is apparently one of symmetry and reciprocity (the basic concept in parity relations), but the previous case pretended to be analogous and reverse, and upon this the Hittites based their right in the present case, though it is in reality quite unbalanced: the Mitannian refusal to give back some mountaineer refugees is compared to the Hittite annexation of an important kingdom. The formal logic of the argument could be correct, but the political substance is patently forged.

Once again, history is manipulated in order to prove that one party is right while the other party is culpable.

A different, even opposite, way to manipulate past relationships is to declare that they had always been excellent (and must continue to be excellent), and simply omit any details that would hardly fit this generic statement. This kind of mythical rather than historical approach is found in relations between great kings: in the letters exchanged, especially on the occasion of a new enthronement (and this applies not only to the Hittites, but to the entire set of diplomatic letters of that time), and in the famous treaty between Egypt and Hatti at the end of bellicose relations (culminating in the Qadesh battle) that are totally omitted in the brief and optimistic introduction.

We pass now to the annals, celebrating the 'manly deeds' of the king. Of course the bravery and success of the king is the main motif, but a more properly apologetic intent is evident (the king behaves correctly, the gods support him, his enemies are doing wrong, and so on), as if the king were in need of justification. This nuance in Hittite history-writing (so different from Assyrian usage) explains the concentration of the annals in the reign of Murshili II, who wrote his own annals in a reduced (ten-year) and a complete version, as well as the Deeds of his father Shuppiluliuma, the major figure behind Hittite military success and territorial expansion. Murshili had to find out the causes for the plague devastating Hatti at the end of his father's reign (he also composed a prayer to this end), and suggested that it was due to the 'sin' in the invasion of Egyptian territory, or to the omission of cultic festivals in favour of excessive devotion to military campaigns in foreign lands. On the other hand, Murshili, the youngest son, who was physically delicate and psychologically overwhelmed by his father's personality, had to demonstrate to the court and the surrounding kings that he was able to outperform his father.

Fully apologetic is a text written by the usurper Hattushili III to explain the legitimacy of his supplanting his nephew Urhi-Teshub at the end of a true and proper civil war. The usual argument of innocence (I did no harm to him, I even protected him, but he tried to downgrade me and I had to react) is augmented by an argument of legitimacy (how could Urhi-Teshub be a legitimate king, when he was not a legitimate son?), and by an appeal to the divine favour demonstrating his right: 'Otherwise, how could it be that the gods let a great king succumb to a small king?'[5] Summing up, Hittite historiography, when compared to Assyrian models, appears much more nuanced and problematic, even defensive. It is an expression of a political world less centred on the unique power of king and god, and more in need of adequate support from the multifarious and quarrelling aristocratic class of extended relatives and high

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[5] H. Otten, *Die Apologie Hattusilis III* (Wiesbaden, 1981), 22–3, ll. iii 75–7.

officials, to enable it to operate in the wider context of multi-centred international interactions.

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PRELUDE TO EMPIRE: NEO-ASSYRIAN ANNALS IN
THE TENTH TO NINTH CENTURIES

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After the invasion of the 'Sea Peoples' (early twelfth century), with extensive destructions of royal palaces (including scribal schools and formalized political communication) and the ensuing infiltration of nomads (Aramaeans) and foreign immigrants (Philistines and Phrygians), the Levant and Anatolia reverted to small-scale polities based on tribes or city-states and turned away from Babylonian culture, adopting the easily accessible alphabetic writing instead of the elaborate scribal training of the 'cuneiform' schools. Assyria and Babylonia also suffered in the general crisis and provide scanty evidence for celebrative and historical compositions, with the notable exceptions (already considered) of Tiglath-pileser I and Nebuchadnezzar I. The changes brought about by the twelfth-century upheavals (in archaeological terms the transition from Bronze to Iron Age) were even more pervasive than those of the sixteenth century, and their influence on history-writing was more relevant.

When the Assyrian recovery was completed (*c*.900), the international scene was completely different from that of the Late Bronze: with the Hatti gone, Egyptian power restricted to the Nile valley, and Babylon still depressed, Assyria was the only 'great power' left in the larger area, and thus could venture on the conquest of the entire known world. With the increase of military campaigns and building activities, the recording and celebration of historical events underwent a notable expansion, generating the most important 'celebrative programme' ever seen in Mesopotamia, surpassing the one set up by the kings of Akkad *c*.1500 years before, and approaching in scope and sophistication those of Tuthmosid and Ramesside Egypt. We have abundant evidence concentrated in the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III.

Although their roles in empire building were different (Ashurnasirpal achieved a national recovery within traditional borders; Shalmaneser ventured outside of them), the celebrative programmes were similar. The basic tools were the annals, aggrandized in scale and detail, accompanied by additional forms of textual composition. But a new tool was provided by the visual art, with sets of true and proper 'historical reliefs' decorating the throne room of Ashurnasirpal's palace at Kalhu, or Shalmaneser's bronze gates at Balawat, or the 'obelisks' set up in various temples. The motifs or the events represented in the reliefs are mostly coincident with those narrated in the texts, and thus made the messages accessible to a wider audience of common people (unable to read the cuneiform writing): the progress of the army, the defeat of

enemies, the storming of cities, the abduction of deportees, and the inflow of tribute.

The function of buildings as a means of communication generated a greater diversification in the textual typology. Previous annals were inscribed on foundation documents buried under the corners of temples and palaces. With the ninth century these documents still existed, but were augmented by monumental inscriptions on the walls of palaces and on standing steles set up in the temples and in conquered countries. The time-honoured tradition (going back to Akkadian times) of setting up steles or rock reliefs at the extreme point reached by the king's advance to mark the ideal border of the empire, received a new revival and became common in the ninth century. As in foundation documents, the king is proud to set up his stele beside those of the ancient kings, to read the ancient steles and to mention them in his own, but he is even more proud to set his stele where no previous king had ever arrived. In the building section of the foundation texts, references to previous kings (so frequent in the Middle Assyrian period) became scarce, for the double reason that more texts were composed on the occasion of new buildings than at restorations of old ones, and that in general terms the exciting perspective of empire building was better projected toward the future than looking back to the past.

In the narrative of the campaigns, references to past events are rare, and are mostly related to the negative conditions of the crisis: territories lost and now recovered, settlements abandoned and now repopulated. But these references make up a minimal percentage of the texts, which are basically devoted to celebrating new, unprecedented achievements. Campaigns, or specific events within a campaign, are recorded according to a fixed narrative pattern: from the announcement of a malfunction or an opposition, through collecting the necessary resources and reaching the site of encounter, to the defeat of the opponent with ensuing destructions and booty, to the final celebration. Some motifs are especially emphasized: the difficult road to be overcome before the encounter, the enemy coalition against the heroically lonely Assyrian king, the foolish enemies relying on their own strength versus the pious Assyrian king trusting in the gods, the useless flight of the enemy king, the stele set up at the extreme end of the route.

Scenes and details of extreme cruelty (both in the texts and in the visual art) are common, and especially frequent under Ashurnasirpal, with enemy prisoners brutalized, killed and mutilated, impaled, flayed, or buried alive. The common explanation, that such insistence was intended as a deterrent to the enemies, cannot be the entire story, since texts and reliefs were rarely accessible to foreigners. The scenes of cruelty (and the very practice of cruelty) were primarily addressed to the domestic public in order to stimulate a 'pack feeling'—the sadistic attitude so common among fighting soldiers, correlated and theologically sublimated by the double firm belief that only the bad enemies will die, and that it is their fault if we have to kill them.

HISTORY-WRITING IN THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE
(EIGHTH TO SEVENTH CENTURIES)

The composition of Assyrian annals continues under the major kings of the eighth to the seventh centuries. Those of Tiglath-pileser III, incompletely preserved, clearly continue the tradition of a narrative segmented into a sequence of similar episodes, with poor literary embellishment, and a shift in emphasis from the motifs of 'exploration' (prominent in the ninth century) to those of final conquest: establishment of provinces and governors, and large-scale deportations. The Annals of Sargon II are much more varied and detailed, enriched by landscape descriptions, and especially concerned with a religious code based on oaths sworn and infringed. The enemies' crime is not rebellion, but the violation of the oath forbidding them to rebel. Such a code is an old one (just remember the Tukulti-Ninurta poem), but it now becomes quite insistent and even obsessive: the enemies are culprits not opposed to just Assyria but toward the gods, and the Assyrian king is simply the actor of the divine vengeance inscribed in the curses of the infringed oath. The Annals of Sennacherib continue Sargon's tradition without relevant novelties. Note that the attention to landscape, which is visible in the texts, is most prominent in the sculptured reliefs of Sennacherib.

By contrast, the annals of the last two kings, Esarhaddon and especially Ashurbanipal, innovate by preferring wider narratives (joining together more campaigns related to the same enemy), enriched by literary embellishments, direct speeches, and psychological notations. This change is parallel to, and confirmed by, the sculptured reliefs of Ashurbanipal, which prefer large unitary pictures (the lion hunt, the battle on the Ulay river, the pursuit of the Arabs, and so on) to the strips (sequences of small scenes) of the older tradition. In a sense this change reduces the distance between the annals and the so-called display inscriptions (synthesizing the king's victories by regions and not by years), which in earlier times had been quite distinct in literary formulation.

Some features of the historical writings of Sargon II and his successors are more fully developed in a different literary genre: the letters to the god Assur. At the end of a major military success, the Assyrian king led a ceremonial parade to the temple of the national god, in the holy city of Assur, and read aloud to the god and the people a report of the campaign, in epistolary form. The best preserved letters are the ones written by Sargon after his victory over Urartu, and by Esarhaddon after his conquest of Shubria (in the Upper Tigris basin). We also have fragments of letters written by the god Assur in reply. Sargon's long letter (430 lines) is most valuable for the descriptions of mountain landscapes and technical activities (horse rearing, irrigation, and so on) and for the detailed inventory of the booty. However, it is basically a narrative text, just much more detailed (ten times more detailed) than the usual annalistic reports. Esarhaddon's letter

is more original in literary form, with the dialogue between the king and his enemy, the siege mishaps, the magic expedients, and the denial of a grace requested too late, and even includes the list of the derisory Assyrian names imposed on the conquered towns. Both letters end with the stereotyped notation of the irrelevant Assyrian casualties ('one charioteer, two horsemen, and three foot-soldiers died') intended to oppose the negative effect of the actual number (quite high) of those who did not come home.[6]

Through all this development, Assyrian historiography is intended to celebrate the glory of the king and of the national god, basically in order to gain political consent from the domestic populace. It is therefore centred on the most recent events, and in this sense it is the most extensive and showy programme ever set up in the entire Near East of ancient times. Records of the remote past were kept in documents (the king list, the list of eponyms) primarily intended for administrative purposes. The use of mythical figures (from Gilgamesh to Adapa) and heroic personages (such as the kings of Akkad) was 'imported' from the Babylonian tradition, and the Babylonian literary texts were also imported, along with other items of booty from the conquered countries.

Relations with Babylonia provided additional tools for chronology and history. The Synchronic List puts in correlation Assyrian and Babylonian kings: for recent periods the correlations are systematic and well founded, but further back in time they become sparse and vague, for lack of adequate information. The Assyrian Synchronistic History (eighth century) revises the relations between the two reigns from Kassite times to Adad-nirari III (*c.*1500 to 780), selecting those events, and providing those interpretations, that demonstrate the correct behaviour of Assyria and the crimes of Babylonia, as explicitly stated in the epilogue. The chronicle deals with the vicissitudes of the border between the two states, perhaps using old treaties as sources (in addition to royal inscriptions), and was composed for the specific political problem of border setting. The Babylonian counterpart is provided by the so-called P(inches) Chronicle, selecting and presenting events of the same period (though only its first half is preserved) in order to establish a more equitable balance, with victories on both sides, but preferring Babylonian success in problematical cases.

NEO-BABYLONIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY: CHRONICLES AND DIARIES

In contrast to Assyria, Babylonia appears much more reliant on her glorious past. After centuries of depression, the Assyrian collapse (612) returned Babylonia to her leading role, under the Chaldean dynasty (625–539). Although the

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Neo-Babylonian kings pretended to be the heirs of the Assyrian Empire, their inscriptions actually mark a voluntary break with Assyrian celebratory historiography as they sponsored a revival of the local tradition that had been neglected for half a millennium, looking back to the time of Nebuchadnezzar I. Babylonian royal inscriptions were concerned with temple building and cultic affairs, while significant occasions for celebration were passed over in silence. For instance, when alluding to the final defeat of Assyria, Nabonidus considers the Medes responsible for the military victory and for the ensuing devastations, while reserving for the Babylonian kings the merit of reconstructing the ruined temples. Or when praising his access to the Lebanon cedar forest, Nebuchadnezzar II only makes an indirect and anonymous reference to wicked enemies (the Egyptians) and prefers to underscore the freeing of the local people.

Internal political fights are present, but are more pronounced in the religious realm than in military affairs. The most important case is provided by the reign of Nabonidus, a usurper of northern origin and a devotee of the moon-god Sin (therefore considered with suspicion by the Babylonian clergy of Marduk). His enthronement, his prolonged absence from Babylon (in Arabian Teyma), and his defeat by Cyrus of Persia were the subject of crossed propaganda. Nabonidus pretended to legitimize his enthronement through divine interventions, portentous dreams, and astral junctions, as well as linking his own care and restoration of the temples and the cultic statues to those previously carried out by Esarhaddon and Nebuchadnezzar II. But one particular text, the so-called Verse Account, written by the pro-Persian clergy of Babylon, depicts him as unable to act correctly in cultic affairs, planning temple building in the wrong way, omitting the celebration of the New Year festival, abandoning Babylon for Teyma, and eventually oppressing the citizens of Teyma. And the same polemics are taken over again by Cyrus in person, in his own Babylonian inscriptions.

The Neo-Babylonian interest in history-writing finds its best realization in the 'chronicles'—a genre that existed before, but in revival reached an impressive flourishing. We are speaking here of chronicles dealing with events of the recent and contemporary times, similar to the annals in their diachronic arrangement (with every section dated to the year of reign of the king), but with the king mentioned in the third person. The most important of the extant chronicles cover the long period from Nabu-nasir (*c*.750) to the enthronement of Ashurbanipal in Assyria and Shamash-shum-ukin in Babylonia; the reign of Nabopolassar with the fall of Nineveh and of the Assyrian Empire, the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, and the reign of Nabonidus. A detailed chronicle is devoted to one year of Neriglissar, but all the others include sequences of many years. It is probable that a continuous series existed, covering the two centuries from Nabu-nasir to Cyrus, divided differently or excerpted into tablets in the various exemplars and repeatedly updated as time passed.

Unlike the Assyrian annals, the Babylonian chronicles look objective: they record both victories and defeats; they do not add propagandistic notations,

literary embellishments, evaluations, or comments; they simply record events in a disinterested way. Some records were necessarily adapted for a Babylonian audience. For example, the repeated omission to celebrate the Akitu (New Year) festival by Nabonidus could not be recorded without expecting a negative reception, but since the statement is stereotyped and impersonal, the event speaks for itself. There are a couple of chronicles (the Akitu Chronicle and the Religious Chronicle) that record almost exclusively this kind of event, as to whether the Akitu could be celebrated or not, with non-celebration clearly the result of foreign rule or domestic disturbances.

The beginning of the chronicle series under Nabu-nasir is noteworthy, considering the role he played in the Hellenistic reconstruction of Babylonian history. Ptolemy says that under that king, the scribes started to record astronomical observations, while Berossus says that he destroyed all the records of previous kings and started a new era. We now know that his reign is the starting point, not only of the chronicle series, but also of the Astronomical Diaries, in which events were recorded day by day. The typology of the events is quite varied: political and military facts are mixed with the market prices and various strange happenings, all implicitly correlated to the positions of stars and planets. We could say that the Diaries are the result of an experimental research—the attempt to collect a database for demonstrating the correlation of astral and human affairs. This was an enormous and unprecedented intellectual enterprise: the anonymous relay from generation to generation of the Babylonian scribal schools during seven centuries, starting in the mid eighth century and regularly updated down to Hellenistic times. It is probable that the Diaries provided the documentary foundation for the chronicles series (as well as for other chronicles outside the main series, like the Esarhaddon Chronicle or the Dynastic Chronicle), although the lexical similarities are far from convincing, apart from specific passages.

In addition to the chronicles dealing with recent or contemporary events, the Babylonian scribes also produced pseudo-chronicles about ancient kings, along with faked stele inscriptions, reviving the tradition of the Weidner Chronicle and of the Naram-Sin Legend. Most of them seem to have been composed in Babylonia during Assyrian times (copies were kept in the library of Ashurbanipal). The Chronicle of the Market Prices borrowed systematic recent information from the Diaries, but then attempted to reach back to Hammurabi, one millennium before, possibly on the basis of royal inscriptions mentioning prices. The same applies to other chronicles like that of the Early Kings (described below). But most relevant is the Sargon Legend—a Babylonian composition of Neo-Assyrian times, in the style of an ancient stele, with a legendary and celebrative account of Sargon's birth and enterprises, which served as a model to be imitated by the most ambitious among future kings, as stated in the final challenge: 'Whatever king will arise after me, let him exercise kingship for thirty-five years, let him rule the black-headed people, let him cut his way through difficult

mountains with copper pick-axes, let him ascend all the high mountains, let him traverse all the foothills, let him circumnavigate the sea-lands three times!'[7]

In proper Neo-Babylonian times (under the Chaldean dynasty), the kings of Akkad were still the most renowned model for kingship. Nabonidus is especially insistent in looking for the old foundation inscriptions of Sargon and Naram-Sin when restoring the ancient temples, and he boasts about being successful where previous kings had failed. Note that the distances in time he calculates from the kings of Akkad to his present are grossly exaggerated (for example, 3,200 instead of 1,700 years), in part because of the overlap of various dynasties in the king lists, but also because the more ancient the original foundation, the more glorious the merit of the restorer, Nabonidus.

Equally indicative of an interest in ages of old are the 'archaizing' fakes composed in Neo-Babylonian times, such as the so-called Cruciform Monument in which Manishtusu, king of Akkad (a son of Sargon), attributes privileges and incomes to the Shamash temple in Sippar. This is a clear fake (imitating the writing of Akkadian times)—a sort of Constantine's Donation *ante litteram*, providing a new grant with the authority of time-honoured antiquity. Also characteristic of the time are the 'collections' of ancient objects and inscriptions, as well as the search (already underway during the Assyrian domination) for the ancient and authentic cult statues of Shamash at Sippar and of Nanaya at Uruk, after centuries of displacement and oblivion. At a more trivial level, cylinder seals in Akkadian style were fabricated in Neo-Babylonian times, and exercises in archaic palaeography were included in the scribal training. Such an archaizing tendency is quite parallel to the coeval trend in Saite Egypt. In both cases, countries of ancient traditions, recovering after a period of depression and foreign rule, tried to re-establish their rank through a direct connection with the most glorious dynasties of the national past.

We have left aside the connection between omens and chronicles, and the ensuing genre of the 'prophecies' (or better said 'apocalypses'). The Chronicle of Early Kings, relating events from Sargon of Akkad to Kassite times, is of special interest because its main source was a collection of 'historical omens', whose apodoses, when put in sequence, form a chronicle-like record. Historical omens had been in existence since Old Babylonian times, but a comparison of the sketchy style of the Mari livers (eighteenth century) with the detailed Neo-Babylonian collection (seventh century) can show how much new elaboration was added during the millennium separating the two sets. The idea of a connection between the ominous 'signs' and the historical events remains a firm Babylonian conviction, even as there is a shift in preference from the more variable liver omens to the absolutely strict system of the astral omens. Since the signs are recurrent (in variable or in obliged times, according to their occasional or astral nature), so

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[7] Westenholz, *Legends of the Kings of Akkade*, 44–5, ll. 22–8.

also history will repeat itself ('cyclical' history, *éternel retour*, and so on), with the ensuing possibility of foreseeing the future.

A collection of astral omens, with very long apodoses about the miserable situation of the country, introduces the genre of the apocalypses in which the protases (the astral or other 'signs') are totally missing and a sequence of anonymous reigns is depicted using the typical phraseology of the omens' apodoses. In some sequences there is an alternation of bad and good reigns; in others all of them are very bad except for the last one, when a righteous king will bring back peace and prosperity. Clearly the audience experienced bad times and hoped for a 'messianic' king to change fortunes, or else the supporters of a new king tried to convince people that he was the expected messiah. All kings are anonymous, and their historical identification remains problematic, but this is an obvious feature of the prophetic genre—that these writings take care to avoid precise details that could prove them wrong.

Closely linked to the Apocalypses are the Chedorlaomer texts (so called because of an assumed connection with the story of Abraham and the Eastern kings in Genesis 14), preserved in very late tablets but going back to the seventh century, where four wicked kings have cryptic names but can be identified because they destroyed Babylon and/or abducted Marduk's statue. The apocalyptic genre is here linked to the recurrent theme of divine punishment on the sacrilegious foreign kings (started at the time of Nebuchadnezzar I), actualized on the occasion of Esarhaddon's reconstruction of Babylon. But the philosophy of history is the same: what happened in the past will happen again, and Marduk will finally triumph.

A unique text (the so-called Babylonian *Fürstenspiegel*) in the library of Ashurbanipal also employs the pattern of the omens in order to construct a political discourse. But the protases, instead of being natural or astral phenomena, are provided by the behaviour of the king: 'If a king does not heed justice, his people will be thrown into chaos, and his land will be devastated, etc.'[8] Although the literary form is traditional, the principle is innovative and most interesting, since the fate of a reign is not inscribed in the stars or in the configuration of a liver, but rather it is the political behaviour of the king that will bring about social consequences.

THE MESOPOTAMIAN TRADITION IN THE ACHAEMENID AND SELEUCID TIMES

After the end of the Chaldean dynasty and the final loss of independence for Mesopotamia, the only valuable historiographic material external to the Babylonian tradition is provided by the Old Persian royal inscriptions, but only

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[8] W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1997), 112–13, l. 1.

the Bisutun inscription of Darius is long and complex enough to compete with the Assyrian ones. The inscription, on a high and inaccessible rock wall, written in a script probably invented for the occasion, was practically unreadable to anyone. Yet its content was accessible, not only thanks to the versions in Babylonian and Elamite script and language on the monument itself, but also because it was disseminated in alphabetic script and the Aramaic language as far away as Egypt.

The text belongs to the genre of the apologies written by usurpers: Darius needs to convince the populace that his enthronement was only apparently irregular, that it was in fact favoured by the god Ahura-mazda and earned by the valour of the new king, who, in only one year, defeated all his opponents, and who, anyhow, belonged to an ancient royal family. The neat contraposition between Darius and his rivals is expressed as a concretization of the basic (we could say 'cosmic') contrast between Truth and Lie so typical of Mazdean religion. All the rivals spoke falsehoods, pretended to be what they were not, starting with the 'false Bardiya' (Herodotus' Smerdis), and going on with a full set of false pretenders in Elam, in Media, in Babylonia, and in many more provinces. Darius is proven to be the only reliable partisan of Truth and Law, and consequently is a legitimate king.

The narrative partly echoes Assyrian motifs (for example, the motif of the useless flight of the enemy king), but it is more standardized and repetitive. Also the pretension to tell the truth, even when the accomplishments are so outstanding that people could suspect them of being forged, has a long history in Mesopotamian tradition, going back to the kings of Akkad and revived from time to time; but with Darius it becomes a theological motif. Note that also the sculptured reliefs of Persepolis are similar to those of Assyria, only in very general terms: the Persian programme is much less 'historical', presenting ideal scenes rather than precise events.

Another interesting parallel with previous tradition can be found in Herodotus' narrative about Darius' *coup d'état*. The inscription on the statue of the Persian king—'Darius son of Hystaspes, thanks to the virtue of his horse and of the groom Oibares, gained the kingship of Persia' (upon which Herodotus builds an amusing tale)—is virtually identical to the inscription on the statue of a king of Urartu as recorded by Sargon II: 'With my two horses and my chariot-driver I conquered the kingship of Urartu'.[9] The transmission of Assyrian and Urartian motifs to Persia should have taken place through Media; but Media remains an empty space, with no writing, no archives, and no celebrative monuments.

The Persian conquest of Babylon, however, did not extinguish the local scribal traditions, which continued until the final abandonment of the cuneiform script in Parthian times. Babylon became one of the four capital cities of the empire,

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[9] Herodotus III, 88; Mayer, 'Sargons Feldzug gegen Urartu – 714 v. Chr. Text und Übersetzung', 110–11, l. 404.

and the Babylonian language one of the official languages: apart from the Babylonian version of the Bisutun inscription, foundation inscriptions celebrating the restoration of temples were composed in the Babylonian script and language by Achaemenid, and later by Seleucid rulers. The inscriptions of Cyrus are the most important, both because he inherited the existing schools and because, as a foreign invader, he was in need of proclaiming himself legitimate and benevolent, putting all the blame on Nabonidus. In addition to the Cyrus cylinder (a typical foundation inscription), literary compositions such as the Verse Account and the King of Justice were also composed to this end, using traditional Babylonian motifs, such as the mountain people summoned by Marduk in order to restore his cult and bring peace to his land (a *topos* whose ultimate origin goes back to the Gutian invasion ending the Akkad dynasty). Such compositions also exploited Nabonidus' odd behaviour in cultic affairs and his absence (to Teyma), which interfered with the proper celebration of the New Year festival. After Cyrus, the size and political relevance of the Babylonian inscriptions decreased, but we still have several exemplars—the last one by Antiochus I around 265.

In the meantime, the scribal schools continued to compose chronicles in the traditional style at least until the reign of Seleucus III (225), and the astronomers continued to record their observations and update the Diaries at least until 62, in full Parthian times. The Diaries of the Hellenistic period, when compared to those of the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid times, appear much more detailed and concerned with political affairs rather than irrelevant oddities. Indeed, they build up a true and proper chronicle style of their own—an additional sign that the Babylonian traditions were vanishing to make way for a new culture of Greek origin.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

(All dates BC)

*c.*1630–1620	Hattushili I of Hatti (Annals and Testament)
*c.*1600	Hittite king Murshili I conquers Babylon
*c.*1520–1430	Middle Hittite and Mitannian historiography
*c.*1370–1350	Amarna letters
*c.*1340–1320	Annals of Murshili II of Hatti and Deeds of Shuppiluliuma
1225	Tukulti-Ninurta I of Assyria: Poem on the conquest of Babylon
*c.*1185	Invasion of the Sea Peoples
1125–1104	Nebuchadnezzar I (2nd Dynasty of Isin): Return of Marduk, Weidner Chronicle
1114–1076	Tiglath-pileser I of Assyria: Annals, Library with Babylonian texts
883–824	First expansion of the Assyrian Empire: Annals of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III

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Chapter 3

Ancient Egypt

John Baines

INTRODUCTION: MANETHO AND
THE EGYPTIAN BACKGROUND

Western writing on historiography has tended to disregard the presentation of the past in societies of regions or traditions other than those which can be understood as coming after the fifth-century BC Greek Herodotus. Egypt was the topic of his much-studied Book 2, and so is often seen as self-evidently outside the strand that is privileged in modern narratives of the history of ideas. If, however, history-writing is the use of the past through written means and the creation of written materials that look to the future so that they can be used as a society's past, ancient Egypt belongs fully with societies that possessed such writing.

The main point of reference for Egyptian historiography in Western scholarship has been after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great: Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 [dates are BC unless otherwise noted]) is said to have commissioned the Egyptian priest Manetho to compose a history of Egypt in Greek. Manetho's text, which is preserved only in perhaps garbled fragments and in excerpts in works of later writers, evidently drew on authentic sources in the Egyptian language. He seems to have included a chronicle-style narrative, the uncertain witness for which is a set of excerpts in Josephus' *Contra Apionem* (first century AD; see Jonathan J. Price in this volume). How that narrative was structured and what its sources were cannot be established; in form it may or may not have owed much to indigenous models. By contrast, the Manethonian king lists and divisions of dynasties, which are known from summaries of works of the patristic writers Africanus and Eusebius (third–fourth centuries AD) by the Byzantine chronicler Syncellus, provide the basic framework within which Egyptian history continues to be studied. Even Manetho's year totals for kings' reigns and dynasties contribute to discussions of chronology. His king-list presentation included brief notes of events of some reigns that have more the character of anecdotes or legends than of sentences culled from longer narratives. This diversity of form raises the question whether Manetho's full work had a

hybrid character more like the Chinese Sima Qian (see William H. Nienhauser, Jr. in this volume) than the Greek texts that are normally taken as analogies.

A view of Egyptian historiography that takes Manetho as its point of departure gives only a distanced perspective. Egypt, like many civilizations, did not develop a genre of written discursive narrative or analysis of the past, but from the beginning of the Dynastic period onward (*c.*3000) the past was curated intensively in writing. Moreover, that period was itself partly defined in terms of writing: Dynastic Egypt was the time when kings' reigns were recorded year by year together with their salient events. Conceptions of a time before the Dynastic period were sustained by visible, and in some periods excavated and re-appropriated, evidence. Periods were defined in retrospect in terms of their founders, of the extent of territory held by claimants to rule Egypt and, at least in anecdote and rhetoric, in terms of particular rulers' achievements. Over vast time spans, most of this treatment focused around kings, but Egypt also possessed extensive genres of non-royal monumental and textual self-presentation. Thousands of personal monuments were created, and memories of individuals could be revived millennia after their deaths. Such monuments are principally tombs and statues or stelae set up in temples, but in principle anything aesthetically formed and inscribed in hieroglyphs—as against cursive writing—was 'monumental', down to quite small objects. For kings, temples and palaces formed part of self-presentation. In the literate tradition, which continued to expand into the Roman period, texts ranging from king lists to fictional narratives thematized past epochs and real or imagined events in them.

MATERIAL AND VISUAL VERSUS WRITTEN

The highest-status forms of display were material and visual. These gave some continuity between Predynastic and Dynastic times. The transition to the Dynastic period was contemporaneous with the appearance of large monuments and the elaboration of figurative decoration, which was inextricably associated with writing, inscribed artefacts, and associated structures. Writing, together with the enhanced potential to record events precisely, appeared with, and formed part of, other profound changes in material culture and in society. This primacy of often large, aesthetically ordered artefacts did not disappear.

In another sense, meanings attaching to material culture participated in history, both before and after the invention of writing. An ivory handle of a knife found in a provincial grave of around 3200 (Naqada IIIA period) (see Fig. 3.1) can be compared with the rusty sword that the Earl Warenne was said to have produced in court in thirteenth-century England as proof of title to his estates.[1] The Egyptian knife is replete with royal symbols expressing the

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[1] M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1993), 36.

FIG 3.1 Ripple-flaked flint knife with relief-decorated ivory handle. From Abu Zaydan, south of Edfu. Length 23.4 cm; length of handle 9.8 cm. Naqada IIIA period.

Source: Brooklyn Museum of Art. Courtesy Brooklyn Museum of Art.

containment of disorder through mastery of animals. Since it was found in a non-royal grave, it was probably a gift that marked its owner's relationship to the perhaps regional ruler. Here one might compare inscriptions on bronzes of Western Zhou elites in China, some of whom narrated a ceremony of royal favour as the occasion for creating the artefacts, which they dedicated to their ancestors while relating the ceremony to an achievement that modern scholars often attempt to connect with events known from the works of much later historians (see Edward L. Shaughnessy in this volume).

The knife's decoration does not appear to mark a specific event, but it points toward the possibility of doing so. Scholars have assumed that within a few generations similar iconography developed to present such a record. Here, the most renowned example is the Narmer Palette (*c.*3000) (see Fig. 3.2), which many have taken since its discovery in 1897–8 as a record of the conquest of Lower Egypt by Upper Egypt that unified the Two Lands of Egypt into a single kingdom, initiating Dynastic period history through a foundation that annals present as being ritually performed at the beginning of each king's reign. An interpretation along these lines is comparably hazardous to attempts by Sinologists to validate Chinese traditional histories through inscriptions on bronzes.

The prime scene on the palette, which shows the king raising a mace to smite a subjected enemy, is of a type attested up to five centuries earlier in a wall painting in a tomb at Hierakonpolis (Naqada IIc period) that includes a group showing a man about to smite three figures (probably signifying plurality). This parallel casts doubt on the recording intention imputed to the palette. The painting seems to have been created during the funeral ceremony; this detail is a small part of the composition. The owner was perhaps a local potentate. The 'record' in the painting could evoke events—also conveyed by other elements in the composition—or it could have been generic. Since it was not seen after the tomb was closed, it did not communicate its meaning to posterity. The painting probably belonged with transmission of knowledge of events
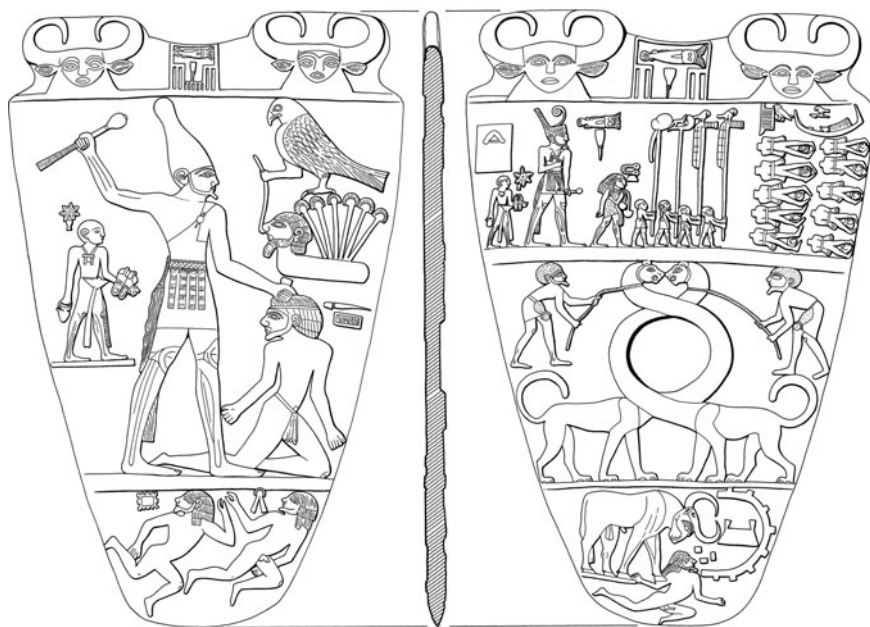
FIG 3.2 The Narmer Palette. Siltstone, decorated in relief. From the Main Deposit at Hierakonpolis. Height 64 cm. Dynasty 0/first dynasty.

Source: Cairo, Egyptian Museum. Drawing by Barry Kemp, reproduced by kind permission.

through similar motifs, on media and in contexts now lost, and in oral form. Curation of specific past events through ceremony and practice could thus assume pictorial form, later followed by more explicit records based on writing, which first appeared around the time when the knife was made, centuries after the painted tomb.

A cylinder and a macehead of Narmer[2] expand on the palette by adding specific written information. This has the form of notations, not of continuous discourse. The cylinder bears the word 'Libya' and an image of captives about to be executed, while the macehead shows captives and booty being presented alongside written totals. As with many military statistics, the totals pay little regard to credibility, rather validating what is shown and rendering it less generic.

The primacy of the visual, which can be observed in other aspects of the written record, affected how events were presented. The hierarchically subordinate position of writing meant that continuous texts recording and displaying

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[2] John Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt* (New York, 2007), 123, figs. 7–8.

the achievements of kings did not appear until many centuries after non-royal elites began to use them.

A characteristic of earlier Egyptian high culture that relates in part to visual primacy is a weak focus on narrative. Cosmology was not organized around stories but more around tableaux, groupings, and listings. Narrative appears to have been fundamental in the oral domain but transmuted into other forms for visual and written recording. Myths, including those of the origin of the state, were not written before the second millennium. The myth of the death of the god Osiris and the final triumph of his posthumously conceived son Horus, which also conveys core political values, is known as a complete tale only from the Greek author Plutarch (first–second centuries AD). This focus on non-narrative structures does not lessen the significance of the past and of tradition. Rather, 'historical writing' should be construed broadly. I explore first non-discursive forms of record that arose from the beginning of Egyptian civilization onward, treating the material in approximate order of first attestation.

YEAR-NAMES AND ANNALS

In Egypt, as in the parallel civilization of Mesopotamia, the earliest records of events that exhibit an ordering intended for future use and instruction are year-names. These appeared in the first dynasty or immediately before, and are attested as carved bone or wooden tags attached to grave goods in royal and elite tombs. The tags are ceremonial objects composed in semi-pictorial mode, but they seem to record specific years. Less extravagant versions using only writing were probably created at the same time and stored cumulatively for reference. By the end of the first dynasty the tags had acquired a purely written form, presumably losing some of their symbolic value. They disappeared thereafter.

Years were typically named after rituals, construction of temples and other buildings, dedication of cult statuary and implements, and military successes. From early on, names were patterned: repeated actions were used—notably the king's biennial progress through the land—it seems in preference to less predictable events. As with the statistics on the macehead, their presentation probably often improved on reality. This style of year-naming was retained throughout the first to third dynasties, but increasingly the names recorded more than one event.

At the beginning of the fourth dynasty the method of identifying years changed. The biennial pattern became fairly rigid, while the point of reference was not a royal progress but 'Year of time *n* of counting all cattle and herd animals' (with variants, often abbreviated). Alternate years were designated 'Year after time *n*…'. At times the counting was annual rather than biennial, so that the pattern was not completely regular. This method of dating continued in use to the end of the Old Kingdom (*c.*2150) and possibly during the following First

Intermediate period. The Theban eleventh dynasty (c.2080–1940) employed an annual numbering of regnal years, which was retained down to the late Roman period (AD 395).

Annals are compilations of events year by year, either for administrative purposes or for more generalized recording and commemoration. The fourth dynasty introduction of numerical dating freed information about years from requirements of extreme brevity. From then on, material that had presumably been stored in central records or archives was excerpted in progressively greater detail in annals. A number of annal inscriptions are known; four identified since 1980 have almost doubled the corpus. No doubt these are a tiny proportion of what there was. All seem to have been set up in temple interiors—most on free-standing hardstone slabs or round-topped stelae. That of Thutmose III is on walls surrounding a shrine for a cult image of the deity in the temple of Karnak. Annals were the most prestigious and sacred inscriptions recording events; known examples were dedicated to deities, not made generally available. The relationship between annal inscriptions and underlying records is uncertain, because no central archive has been discovered. Some administrative documents were kept as daybooks (Middle Kingdom examples from a temple and a court visit to Thebes survive), probably including ones recording military campaigns, but it is unlikely that these were the sole sources for annals.

The 'Palermo Stone' and related fragments are the oldest surviving annals. This fragmentary monument (from one or more originals) was probably inscribed in the late fifth dynasty (c.2350). One side bore a register with many names, presumably of Predynastic kings (now unintelligible), followed by four registers with year-names of first–third dynasty kings (c.2950–2575), and an uncertain number of further registers for most of the fourth dynasty. Beneath the year-names were indications of the height of the Nile's annual inundation (essential for assessing taxation). Kings' names and their mothers' names were inscribed in a band above the year-names. At the break between one king and the next was a notation of the number of days of the relevant year distributed between the two kings. In this way precise chronological information was included. The other side of the stone bore several registers of increasingly extensive entries for kings of the fifth dynasty. A second annal stone that gave still fuller records for years of sixth-dynasty kings was erased for reuse as a sarcophagus lid within a few decades of its original inscription. Only patches of text are now decipherable. That stone could have been a sequel to the Palermo Stone.

The annal tradition bifurcated no later than the Middle Kingdom. An inscription of Senwosret I bears annals of the temple of Heliopolis, the most important religious centre of earlier Egypt, while two blocks found in the temple of Ptah at Memphis record parts of two years of the general annals of Senwosret's co-regent and successor, Amenemhat II, in vastly greater detail than Old Kingdom annal stones. Temple annals are also known from Heliopolis (Pami, twenty-third dynasty, early eighth century) and Kawa in Sudan (Taharqa, covering the years

*c.*689–682, 682–680). The latest and longest known annals of non-temple events are those of the military campaigns to Syria-Palestine of Thutmose III. Unlike the Old Kingdom annals and those of Amenemhat II, these focus around a single theme. A possible form of 'annal' text is a set of issues of over-large stone scarabs (5.2–11 cm high) disseminated in the first dozen years of Amenhotep III, each of which presents a salient non-military fact or achievement of the period, mostly in a style of notation similar to that of annals.[3] Central annals probably continued to be created and inscribed on stone in later periods, from which preservation is poor because the main centres were in the humid, heavily populated north.

While year-names could have had a practical purpose in administration, this was not the case with annals, which created a record of royal actions, many of them on behalf of the gods. Set up in temples, the annal stones dedicated past and present achievements to those gods. It is not known how widely the content of annals was disseminated, but the parallel of the scarabs does not favour its being severely restricted. Notations of the founding of estates could have had a practical purpose, because temples provided secure loci for inscriptions recording important property transactions which high-ranking individuals could set up with royal permission. Nonetheless, the main concern of annal creation must have been to record the past: annals were significant historiography. While their listing of deeds and statistics lacks superficial rhetoric, it is as highly ideological as more loquacious modes. Furthermore, their notational syntax of narrative infinitives, far removed from spoken language, remained prestigious in all periods.

KING LISTS

King lists formed a parallel tradition to annals. The earliest known examples are on two first-dynasty sealings from the royal necropolis at Abydos that had presumably been used in the mortuary cult of the kings or in safeguarding the monuments. One seal gives names of kings from Narmer to Den and his regent mother Meritneith, and the other Narmer to Qaʿa, the dynasty's last king (Narmer may belong in the first dynasty or immediately before). Both seals place the kings' names under the tutelage of Khentimentiu, the god of the necropolis. By the fifth dynasty, some kings' names had been incorporated into encyclopaedic lists that were probably part of the core of high-cultural knowledge. An excerpt on a writing board—a medium used in advanced scribal training—includes the names of six kings of the second to fifth dynasties (two

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[3] John Baines, 'On the Genre and Purpose of the "Large Commemorative Scarabs" of Amenhotep III', in Nicolas-Christophe Grimal et al. (eds.), *Hommages à Fayza Haikal* (Cairo, 2003), 29–43.

fifth, two fourth, one third, and one second). Significantly, one name is short-ened and a second garbled, in forms known from later king lists ancestral to versions rendered by Manetho in Greek letters. This suggests that a written tradition of names of kings was excerpted and maintained as a distinct element in elite education.

Other known king lists date to the New Kingdom, from the reign of Thut-mose III to the nineteenth dynasty (*c.*1292–1190). These divide into a single list on papyrus, and monumental lists in non-royal tombs and temples. Instances in tombs celebrate the past in relation to an individual's identity and destiny, while those in temples are in presentations of the cult, which included that of rulers ancestral to whoever commissioned the decoration. These different usages may have been transmitted separately, but both relate to the same tradition of names and could derive from similar sources. The selection of names varies. It has been suggested that the Thutmose III 'list', which decorated a room in the temple of Karnak and is presented as seated figures of kings, records those of whom monu-ments were extant there when it was created. Other examples give selections that respect historical periods, omitting whole 'intermediate' periods as well as kings whom tradition had rejected. The most significant example is the list in the temple of Sety I at Abydos, which includes seventy-six names, ending with Sety himself.

Some non-royal lists display connections between royalty and cult. The royal family of the early eighteenth dynasty (*c.*1540–1490)—the ruling group most strongly associated with Thebes—was venerated there in the nineteenth–twentieth dynasties (*c.*1292–1075). Scenes in tombs in Western Thebes give remarkably full sets of its members, including some queens and princes. A group of statues depicted in the nearby mortuary temple of Ramesses II depicts the principal kings of the eighteenth dynasty preceded by Menes, the legendary founder of the state, and Nebhepetre Mentuhotep, the eleventh-dynasty king who reunified Egypt and initiated the Middle Kingdom. This marks an histor-ical division into three major phases: the Early Dynastic period and Old Kingdom together, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom. That division is comparable with the king lists, but probably had a local significance because of the salience of the early eighteenth-dynasty kings.

The only 'literary' example on papyrus is the Turin king list. This fragmen-tary document includes names from the gods and spirits, who preceded earthly kingship, the holders of which were listed, probably down to the end of the Second Intermediate period (*c.*1520), as fully as possible. Unlike other examples, the Turin list gives lengths of reign and totals for periods, sometimes down to months and days. The most striking total is double. First comes 181 years from Teti (first king of the sixth dynasty) to Ibi, last king of the eighth dynasty, which ended what is now termed the Old Kingdom. This is followed by 955 years for the period from Menes—the notional founder of the Egyptian state, perhaps equivalent to Narmer or to Aha of the first dynasty—to Ibi. Divisions like these

show that the tradition which ultimately reached Manetho recognized ruling houses in a consistent way. Dynasties were named for their royal residences, but the presence of successive dynasties with the same residence shows that other criteria applied (the Egyptian term for 'dynasty', not used in the papyrus, is 'house' or 'estate', *pr*). Most of these divisions correspond with those made on various grounds by historians today.[4]

The totals in the papyrus cannot be used for precise chronological reckoning because they include clear errors, while contemporaneous kings—for example, belonging to rival dynasties—are given as if they were successive. The figures are nevertheless valuable. How much was known about periods of divided rule or co-regencies is uncertain, but the proliferation of lines of kings in the later Third Intermediate period (*c.*850–715)—a time that was productive for later literary tradition—could have favoured awareness of their simultaneity. Or king lists may have conveyed an inflated sense of duration, rather as they did to the famous archaeologist W. M. Flinders Petrie in the early twentieth century.

BIOGRAPHICAL SELF-PRESENTATION

From the fourth dynasty (*c.*2575) onward, non-royal individuals commemorated their own lives, notably in royal service, in tomb inscriptions that gradually became longer and increasingly used continuous discourse. Non-discursive and pictorial forerunners date to the first–third dynasties. By the fifth dynasty (*c.*2400), some people enumerated many kings under whom they had served, on occasion in a form similar to a list. Examples from the sixth dynasty include narratives of trading expeditions abroad and of military campaigns. A partly distinct approach to self-presentation was to laud one's idealized personal qualities and actions in a local context, perhaps for lack of major events to display or close connections with the king, who provided the focus of the values invested in such events. Most self-presentations are cast in the first person, but they are hardly 'autobiographies' because they do not narrate a life and were generally composed by professionals, often after their protagonists' deaths.

Not all self-presentations were legible in the locations where they were set up, but they constituted public display and often addressed an audience explicitly, for example in cursing those who might deface the tomb. They probably developed out of modes of commemoration that continued to be practised alongside written forms, but they acquired a life of their own. From the Middle Kingdom onward, some examples include information about date of birth that shows a precise embedding of a life in an unfolding period—something that was not

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[4] See Thomas Schneider, 'Periodizing Egyptian History: Manetho, Convention, and Beyond', in Klaus-Peter Adam (ed.), *Historiographie in der Antike* (Berlin, 2008), 183–97.

straightforward in the absence of an epochal fixed point.[5] Such a point may have existed theoretically in the Egyptian 'Sothic cycle' of about 1,460 years (based on the rising of the star Sirius/Sothis in midsummer), during which the calendar year of 365 days cycled forward, one year for every four, through the lunisolar year, but nothing suggests that this was used as an organizing principle.

How far self-presentations are 'historical' in intent is uncertain. A significant proportion of the modern reconstruction of Egyptian history depends on a few examples that narrate crucial events. An instance is the expulsion of the ethnically Asiatic 'Hyksos' fifteenth dynasty which marks the beginning of the New Kingdom (around year 18 of the eighteenth-dynasty King Ahmose, *c.*1510). This is known from the self-presentation of the like-named Ahmose son of Ebana, inscribed in his tomb a generation later, but from no other discursive source.[6] His text mentions mainly incidents that led to his receiving rewards from kings. The inscriptions of his contemporary, Ahmose Pennekhbet, exhibit that principle still more clearly. Yet Ahmose son of Ebana's text nonetheless conveys the shape of his entire life, while the choice of episodes and the defining event, which other evidence shows was seen as inaugurating an epoch, may be less wholly self-focused than appears at first sight. Victory over the Hyksos capital, Avaris, is also mentioned on a probably gilded bronze spear-point of the reign of Ahmose that may have been a royal gift comparable with the Naqada III period knife-handle (see Fig. 3.1).[7] As a martial token of an event whose significance was immediately recognized, it constitutes instant history-writing, of a type known in many cultures.

Self-presentations were powerful stimuli to interest in the past. Significant examples were in prominent tombs or on statues or stelae in major temples. The preservation of these works and their texts is inextricably associated. Leading individuals who had access to such monuments might restore them—a practice attested notably in New Kingdom Thebes and around Memphis in the Late period—or fashion their own self-presentations after old texts or images, making choices between following recent models and taking ones from the distant past. The latter approach required knowledge of earlier periods, among which the Old and Middle kingdoms were prime reference points as ideal epochs, the former as the time of the great pyramids and the latter as the 'classical' period of written culture and of various cultural forms. It was possible to exploit the past in this way because many monuments were inscribed, and bore kings' names that rendered them easily datable. This precision of recourse shows that the

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[5] Stephen J. Seidlmayer, '"*Dreissig Jahre liess ich gehen…*" Ergänzungen zu zwei Jubiläumsinschriften im Gebiet von Aswân', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo*, 57 (2001), 247–56.

[6] Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3 vols. (Berkeley, 1973–80), ii. 12–15.

[7] Svetlana Khodjash and Oleg D. Berlev, 'Objets royaux du Musée des Beaux-Arts Pouchkine à Moscou', *Chronique d'Egypte*, 52 (1977), 22–5.

knowledge embodied in king lists was not a separate strand of tradition: it permeated elite culture. Moreover, most names that were garbled in lists were those of kings for whom identifiable structures probably did not survive, such as first–second dynasty rulers, whose mudbrick monuments were little inscribed.

Both self-presentations and royal inscriptions evoke archives. A trope of the late Old Kingdom and its aftermath is the statement that the protagonist 'could not find' that anyone had achieved something before. Its reverse is the assertion in a letter of King Pepy II (*c.*2200) to a high official, which was then inscribed as part of the latter's self-presentation, that he had brought back a dwarf who was 'the like of the dwarf brought back by the Expedition Leader Werdjededba from Punt in the time of Izezy' (about a century earlier).[8] The sources evoked there could have been written or oral, but other evidence demonstrates that written archives were maintained.

Textual self-presentations continued to be created until the early Roman period (*c.*30 BC), with a single known outlier from the second century AD. Several examples include 'historically' significant narratives. Udjahorresne, who lived through the late twenty-sixth dynasty into Persian rule (*c.*550–500), carved an inscription on a statue of himself that he dedicated in the temple of Sais, the twenty-sixth dynasty residence.[9] His text does not narrate the Persian invasion, but it describes his service for the Persian kings Cambyses (525–522 in Egypt) and Darius I (521–486) and mentions turmoil, in a passage probably alluding to the conquest, as well as how he appealed to Cambyses to clear the temple precinct of the foreign troops who were living in it. Egyptologists have characterized Udjahorresne as a 'collaborator', but such a judgement is anachronistic. He was buried in a large tomb near Memphis and appears to have been venerated after death.[10] If anything, his historical role was celebrated. The veneration could have arisen from oral tradition, supported by awareness of his role as propagated through his statues (many elites had statues in numerous temples).

Another significant example is Petosiris, whose temple-like tomb dates to the early Ptolemaic period (*c.*300). Petosiris claimed to have restored several temples in his city, Hermopolis, using the knowledge of temple scribes, and even reconstructing a shrine that had been no more than a memory.[11] The evocation of old documents is a mode of legitimation shared with magical texts, bringing out the importance of ancient records to many aspects of high culture. In addition, Petosiris, a little like Udjahorresne, mentioned a foreign ruler of Egypt explicitly, but without naming him. The ruler could be Alexander the Great (332–322 in Egypt) or one of his successors down to Ptolemy I Soter (321–305 as satrap, 305–284 as king).

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[8] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, i. 26.   [9] Ibid., iii. 36–41.
[10] Ladislav Bareš, *Abusir IV: The Shaft Tomb of Udjahorresnet at Abusir* (Prague, 1999).
[11] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, iii. 45–9.

These are among very rare self-presentations that evoke foreign rule. For the three centuries of the Ptolemaic dynasty, the indigenous elite served the Macedonian-Greek rulers and interacted with them in many ways, but they seldom described these activities, mostly focusing on their roles in temples.[12] The Ptolemies were major patrons of indigenous culture, funding the greatest wave of construction of temples for the Egyptian gods so far (the early Roman period was another peak of activity), but there too, little is evidently un-Egyptian. A remarkable exception is the high priest of Ptah, Psherenptah, who died in 41 BC. His memorial stela describes how he visited Alexandria (named through a periphrasis), and was in turn visited in Memphis by the king (Ptolemy XII Auletes, 80–58 and 55–51) and his entourage.[13]

The cultural significance of non-royal self-presentations is visible in another way in the early centuries AD, when temple collections of traditional and literary texts included copies of examples from tombs at Asyut dating to the First Intermediate period (c.2050).[14] These may have been valued as prime examples of the classical language, but they also speak to the centrality of this narrative genre.

In the first millennium BC the maintenance of tradition through individuals and their factual or fictional biographies influenced religion and senses of the past. Mortuary cults of early kings were revived, while the culture hero Imhotep, an archaeologically attested contemporary of Djoser (c.2650–2630), the builder of the first pyramid, was deified and ascribed powers, particularly in healing. This development was contemporaneous with the excavation of parts of Djoser's Step Pyramid complex and the revival of motifs from there in statuary and reliefs. Precision in knowledge of their period, more than 2,000 years earlier, relates to the written tradition of king lists—Djoser is the only name written in red in the Turin king list—to texts in other genres, and to the accessible monumental record.

A final development in New Kingdom and later self-presentations is occasional precise indication of people's birthdates and ages, sometimes in relation to royal service. Although the modern notion that interest in such matters characterizes literate cultures is problematic, the specificity of the Egyptian examples is difficult to envisage without a practice of recording and displaying the past. Ptolemaic self-presentations evoke life spans in particularly telling ways.[15] For sacred animals, details of birth, length of life, and death to the day were given as for human beings and are more salient in the record. This information bespeaks

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[12] Gilles Gorre, *Les relations du clergé Egyptien et des Lagides d'après les sources privées* (Leuven, 2009). David Klotz, 'The statue of the *dioikêtês* Harchebi/Archibios. Nelson–Atkins Museum of Art 47–12', *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, 109 (2009), 281–310.

[13] John Baines, 'Egyptian Elite Self-presentation in the Context of Ptolemaic Rule', in William V. Harris and Giovanni Ruffini (eds.), *Ancient Alexandria between Egypt and Greece* (Leiden, 2004), 57–9.

[14] Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt*, 332 with refs.

[15] For example, that of Taimhotep (42 BC): Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, iii. 59–65.

a strong sense of 'history' in relation to the individual as well as the polity—a history that was sustained without a disengaged and discursive form of historical writing.

ROYAL MONUMENTS AND 'HISTORICAL' INSCRIPTIONS

Royal monuments constitute the most important form of 'historical' display in Egypt. I treat them late because they were latecomers in the use of continuous discourse, due to the primacy of image over text and to the ubiquity of captions in pictorial compositions. In essence, the formal characteristics of the Narmer Palette (see Fig. 3.2) continued to apply in later times.

The decoration of pyramid complexes of the fourth to sixth dynasties included depictions of events such as making remarkable boats or delivering a pyramid's capstone,[16] through reception of missions returning from abroad, to booty from campaigns, and assertion of defeat of foreign peoples, often metaphorically, for example showing the king as a griffin trampling on his foes. A salient motif features the king trampling Libyan enemies, in a composition that includes the Libyan ruler's family and elite captives along with animal booty, registered by the goddess of writing.[17] The iconography and context are divine rather than human, but the content might not be imaginary. However, the names of the Libyan family are the same in all Old Kingdom examples, as well as in one at Kawa in Sudan from the reign of Taharqa (*c.*690–664). This has been taken to mean that the oldest surviving relief, of the fifth dynasty king Sahure (*c.*2440–2430), represents a real campaign, whereas the remainder copy his relief. While that may be valid for Taharqa, under whom Old Kingdom monuments around Memphis were investigated and Sahure's temple was accessible, there is no reason to suppose that the latter's composition was the first. Moreover, his design exhibits analogies with the cylinder of Narmer (mentioned above), half a millennium earlier.

Thus, third-millennium images of royal action may include 'historical' information, but they present the king's ideal role much more clearly than any specific reality. One reason for this reticence may be that decorum limited representations of him interacting with human beings. He also had to be above competition with men. The same requirements are visible for Sahure in a vast hunt composition, where he dominates the scene, which is both celebration and proxy for mastering disorder.[18] Behind him is his hierarchically arranged entourage.

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[16] Zahi Hawass and Miroslav Verner, 'Newly Discovered Blocks from the Causeway of Sahure', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo*, 52 (1996), 181–2, fig. 1, pl. 54.

[17] Dagmar Stockfisch, 'Bemerkungen zur sog. "libyschen Familie"', in Mechthild Schade-Busch (ed.), *Wege öffnen: Festschrift für Rolf Gundlach zum 65. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden, 1996), 315–25.

[18] John Baines, 'Kingship before Literature: The World of the King in the Old Kingdom', in Rolf Gundlach and Christine Raedler (eds.), *Selbstverständnis und Realität* (Wiesbaden, 1997), 147 with fig. 5a.

Here, one figure was altered to depict his successor, Neferirkare, in royal insignia, demonstrating active engagement with the image as a record after Sahure's death. It is not known whether the figure was originally captioned as Neferirkare, who could have been the designated successor or a usurper.

At the beginning of the New Kingdom, pictorial composition types comparable with those known from the Old Kingdom were transformed to depict specific events (Middle Kingdom evidence is very sparse). The earliest example is a battle relief of Ahmose, which includes the oldest known depictions of horses, recently introduced to Egypt with the war chariot.[19] The composition appears not to have been highly schematic. Later military compositions fluctuate between formal and freer designs. Either can incorporate specific information, for example in lists of places subject to the king, each of which is shown as a walled town outline topped by a human torso bound as a captive, with a name written inside the outline. Rigid schemas like this one can hardly present narrative, so that they strain Western definitions of 'historiography', but they situate the core polity in relation to others and incorporate the vision of a period—often a little earlier than the date when they were inscribed—in compelling visual form. These compositions are often termed 'topographical lists',[20] but insofar as they change through the New Kingdom, their principal period, they are historiographic.

The nineteenth and twentieth dynasties (also known as the Ramessid period) saw the most powerful depictions of battles. Ramesses II (*c.* 1279–1213) decorated many temple walls with images of his campaigns, especially the Battle of Qadesh in Syria in his year 5.[21] Ramesses III (*c.* 1187–1156) covered surfaces of his mortuary temple at Medinet Habu with reliefs showing military operations, including resisting two Libyan incursions and an encounter with the Sea Peoples, in the closing years of the Bronze Age Near East. Both kings left extensive texts narrating the same topics.[22] The Qadesh episode is corroborated— though its significance is not supported—in cuneiform tablets from Boghazköy, the capital of the Hittite Empire, against which Ramesses II fought. Achievements of Ramesses III that were depicted on his temple were also chronicled, together with some otherwise unattested, in the Great Harris Papyrus, a posthumous document addressed to the gods and compiled under his successor, Ramesses IV (*c.* 1156–1150).[23] The main content of the papyrus is a comprehensive list of donations to temples, while the first-person narrative at the end is one of very few royal texts that in principle cover a complete reign. The juxtaposition of these two styles may be compared with the content of annals.

[19] Stephen Harvey, 'Monuments of Ahmose at Abydos', *Egyptian Archaeology*, 4 (1994), 3–5.
[20] For example, Jan Josef Simons, *Handbook for the Study of Egyptian Topographical Lists Relating to Western Asia* (Leiden, 1937).
[21] Lichtheim, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, ii. 57–72.
[22] A. J. Peden, *Egyptian Historical Inscriptions of the Twentieth Dynasty* (Jonsered, 1994), 7–68.
[23] Pierre Grandet, *Le Papyrus Harris I (BM 9999)*, 3 vols. (Cairo, 1994–99).

The case of Sety I (*c.* 1290–1279) is different. His impressive reliefs on the exterior of the largest hall at Karnak depict successful campaigns in Palestine and Syria and the return home with prisoners and booty for presentation to Amon-Re, the god of Thebes. No narrative text with parallel content is known from Egypt, but an inscription from Beth Shan in Palestine, along with other evidence, supports the core of what is depicted.

For Ramesses III this matter is less clear. While his encounters with Libyan groups seem fairly well established, the reliefs include a battle against a Hittite fortress in Syria even though the Hittite Empire had probably disappeared by then, and a possibly fictitious campaign in Nubia. The battle against the Sea Peoples too may conflate relatively modest engagements into something grandiose. It might be tempting to attribute such issues of historicity to the use of images rather than texts, but this can hardly be the explanation, because texts too exist. More to the point is the need for kings to express ideals, together with a tendency to escalate what was claimed from one reign to the next. Ramesses III looked to Ramesses II as his model, while wishing to surpass him.

Invoking the past in this way could lead in different directions. Ramesses IV began numerous grand constructions during his short reign, and he too wished to emulate Ramesses II. Unlike those two kings, the overriding focus of his aspirations in his inscriptions was to serve the gods properly. In one text he stated that in his first four years of reign he had done more for the gods than Ramesses II had in his sixty-seven years.[24] What is significant here is not so much his exaggerated claim as the citation of an exact reign length, which implies either a broad awareness of information of the kind transmitted in king lists, or a special fame for Ramesses II's uniquely long reign. The latter interpretation may be the more plausible, but a non-royal self-presentation from a couple of centuries earlier that mentions the precise day of death of Thutmose III points to the importance of chronology for a sense of history, as well as its inscription throughout the New Kingdom.

In a less public context, an administrative document of the reign of Ramesses IX recounts an inspection of tombs at Thebes to establish how many had been robbed. The tomb of a king Sobekemsaf (seventeenth dynasty, *c.*1600) had been violated; this was presented as a favourable result because all other royal tombs were intact. In public argument, the mayor of Thebes responded that this was wrong because Sobekemsaf had been a 'a great ruler who performed ten significant tasks for Amon-Re king of the gods, the great god; his monuments endure in [the god's] courtyard to this very day'.[25] One cannot know whether these words were spoken or whether the mayor to whom they are attributed knew anything about that king, but knowledge of the past was used in argument, and

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[24] Peden, *Egyptian Historical Inscriptions of the Twentieth Dynasty*, 154–7. Ramesses II reigned sixty-six complete years and an incomplete year; these were counted as sixty-seven.

[25] Baines, 'Ancient Egyptian Concepts and Uses of the Past', 196 with refs.

temple monuments, of which Karnak had hundreds, were cited in evidence. Curation of the past could have resonance in elite lives.

Historical inscriptions intersected with 'literary' forms. Egyptian inscribed discourse was metrically organized, in a language far from any vernacular. Royal narrative inscriptions emerged under the Theban eleventh dynasty (*c.*2000), against the background of non-royal self-presentations. They developed strongly in the Middle Kingdom, when belles-lettres were first written down. The two influenced each other. The Tale of Sinuhe, the best-known narrative in Classical Egyptian, composed perhaps around 1850, includes a eulogy of King Senwosret I—to whom the earliest long royal inscriptions date—and an exchange of letters between him and the tale's protagonist, as well as adaptations of stock biographical phraseology. A narrative of how Senwosret held court and decided to build a temple for the sun-god at Heliopolis, preserved in an eighteenth-dynasty manuscript, uses fictional modes to present seemingly factual content.[26] This text could be a later literary creation, but the setting of a king who consults his advisers, elicits their opinion, and then decides for his own proposal, is attested from the Middle Kingdom to the Macedonian period (the 'Satrap Stela' of the later Ptolemy I Soter).[27] A striking instance is a long inscription of the thirteenth-dynasty king Neferhotep I, who took advice when he wished to commission a cult statue for Osiris according to the best models. He then went to the temple archives and found relevant old texts.[28] This example combines probably fictional setting, rather implausible content, and the idea of ancient writings.

Texts like these form a genre, termed *Königsnovelle* by Alfred Hermann. An English equivalent is 'royal tale'.[29] Examples have been identified in diverse contexts, of which the most significant are perhaps within annal inscriptions. A passage in the annals of Amenemhat II shows the king vastly surpassing his officials in hunting, and displaying his superior understanding of equipment.[30] Thutmose III is said to have taken counsel about how to approach the Palestinian city of Megiddo on his first military campaign, to have spurned advice, and then to have succeeded through his prowess.[31] These rhetorically worked episodes, in texts that have been seen as essentially factual, show that for a crafted record the sense of what ought to be was more important than simple enumeration. The annal inscription of Amenemhat II is not composed in continuous

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[26] Aldo Piccato, 'The Berlin Leather Roll and the Egyptian Sense of History', *Lingua Aegyptia*, 5 (1997), 137–59.

[27] 'The Satrap Stela', trans. Robert K. Ritner in William Kelly Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt* (3rd edn, New Haven/London, 2003), 392–7.

[28] 'The Neferhotep Stela', trans. Simpson ibid., 339–44.

[29] Antonio Loprieno, 'The "King's Novel"', in id. (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms* (Leiden, 1996), 277–95.

[30] Hartwig Altenmüller and Ahmed M. Moussa, 'Die Inschrift Amenemhets II. aus dem Ptah-Tempel von Memphis', *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur*, 18 (1991), 17–18, nos. 25–6.

[31] Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, ii. 30–1.

discourse but in lists and statistics, so that the assertions of the king's hunting achievement, which are the sole surviving clauses of discourse, emerge as salient. They bring home the fact that any record uses and transmits the past in the interests of patron and audience.

Another area of intersection between literature and royal display was subjective emotion. Ramesses II's narrative of the Battle of Qadesh recounts his sense of being abandoned and his appeal to his divine patron Amon-Re of Thebes, who helped him from afar and enabled him to save the day. A fragmentary inscription of Taharqa goes further and admits a failure, the occasion of which is not clear, perhaps to be followed by his recouping the situation.[32] Such probably legitimizing dramatizations may have drawn upon models in imaginative literature more freely than did royal tales.

For the New Kingdom, the interweaving of royal narrative inscriptions and literary transmission is confirmed by occurrences of inscriptional texts on other media. Part of a stela text of the seventeenth-dynasty king Kamose, who fought against the Hyksos rulers of northern Egypt in the mid sixteenth century, is known from a slightly later writing board—a standard medium for scribal instruction.[33] The twelfth-dynasty building inscription of Senwosret I is attested from a mid-eighteenth-dynasty leather roll. Leather was a prestige writing medium, but that fact does not assist in deciding whether this is an authentic Middle Kingdom text. The Battle of Qadesh texts of Ramesses II are attested in a papyrus copy from a generation after they were inscribed on temple walls. These examples sit within literary practice, but nothing comparable is known from the first millennium. This wider dissemination of 'historical' texts may therefore have been limited to one period. In Graeco-Roman times, compilers of a lexical list used historical texts from the twentieth dynasty, as well as creating numerous narrative texts that utilized settings and names of kings from the Old and Middle Kingdoms and as far back as the Early Dynastic period.[34]

In another extension of the treatment of royalty, where kings are written about in independent compositions, from the Middle Kingdom onward fictional tales were sited at the courts of kings. These include the Tale of Sinuhe, which has a relatively mundane setting and plot and was set a generation or two before it was composed; a prophecy of the demise of the Old Kingdom and revival of the state in the twelfth dynasty that is set at the court of Snofru, the first king of the fourth dynasty; and a moralizing tale of injustice and its righting in which the

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[32] Pascal Vernus, 'Inscriptions de la Troisième Période Intermédiaire (I)', *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, 75 (1975), 30–2, 55–9.

[33] 'The Kamose Texts', trans. Simpson in Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 345–50.

[34] Christian Leitz, book review, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 57 (2000), 273–4. Other material: Kim Ryholt, 'On the Contents and Nature of the Tebtunis Temple Library', in Sandra Louisa Lippert and Maren Schentuleit (eds.), *Tebtunis und Soknopaiu Nesos* (Wiesbaden, 2005), 141–70.

king is Pepy II (*c.*2240–2170), who is spied upon conducting a clandestine affair with a military officer.[35] Like much other material, the tales exhibit knowledge of the setting of earlier kings. But although scholars have wished to exploit such texts to help fill gaps in what is known of Egyptian history, all of them bear clear fictional markers. New Kingdom examples overlap with folklore, including a tale of capturing the Palestinian city of Jaffa by a ruse similar to the Greek Trojan Horse or Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.[36] Again, historical setting will not have masked fiction.

DEVELOPMENTS OF THE FIRST MILLENNIA BC AND AD

As major centres concentrated in the Nile Delta, conditions for the preservation of inscribed materials became worse. From the Third Intermediate and Late periods (*c.*1070–332), far fewer royal inscriptions survive than from earlier times, while most of the abundant non-royal self-presentations are less relevant to 'history' than earlier ones (exceptions are mentioned above). At least from the mid eighth century onward, however, there was intensive curation of the past, visible notably in sculptural styles and tomb decoration. Among the former, a seventh-century statue of a vizier from Karnak looks back to a specific statue of Amenhotep, son of Hapu, a leading figure of the reign of Amenhotep III who was later deified.[37] The statue of Amenhotep (one of many) invites people to address it with their concerns so that he will mediate with the temple's gods (only priests could enter inner areas of temples), and bears signs of wear showing that it was an object of devotion. The vizier must have known Amenhotep's statue and his exceptional posthumous status. To appreciate the later man's statue, viewers would have needed comparable antiquarian knowledge.

A similar attitude is more explicit in the late seventh-century tomb of Ibi at Thebes, where parts of the decoration evoke the sixth-dynasty tomb of a namesake at Deir el-Gabrawi (*c.*2150), about 200 kilometres to the north. The later Ibi's exploitation of this coincidence of name required him, or his advisers, to be aware of groups of provincial tombs from 1,500 years earlier and to record one of them as an exemplar of a tradition worth reviving. An inscription in his tomb encourages the visitor to read and copy the text and the decoration.[38] Here, traditional functions of the tomb are transmuted to some extent into a monument

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[35] *The Tale of Sinuhe and Other Ancient Egyptian Poems, 1940–1640 BC*, trans. R. B. Parkinson (Oxford, 1997), 288–9.

[36] 'The Capture of Joppa', trans. Edward F. Wente, Jr. in Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 72–4.

[37] James F. Romano, *The Luxor Museum of Ancient Egyptian Art* (Mainz, 1979), no. 117, with Jaromir Malek, *Egypt: 4000 Years of Art* (London, 2003), 290.

[38] Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt*, 154, 332–3, with references.

that glorifies its owner by placing him in a chain of cultural transmission where he is the link between past and future.

A vast textual exploitation of older motifs as cultural statement is found in the victory stela of Piye (or Piankhi, *c.*750–715), the Kushite conqueror of Egypt around 730, from Gebel Barkal in Sudan.[39] Whereas the stela's highly innovative crowning relief scene owes little to older models, the text—one of the longest known royal inscriptions—is masterly in its exploitation of classical language and phraseology. Its author was deeply learned in traditional writings and evoked some identifiable passages. The text is written in modified Classical Egyptian with full comprehension of older forms. Written culture was far from spoken practice. Classical Egyptian went back to the Middle Kingdom, and the Kushite milieu of Piye spoke the unrelated Meroitic language.

In the Ptolemaic period (305–30 BC), traditional culture was maintained and developed in and around the temples of Egyptian deities, while the newly founded Alexandria and a few other centres dominated in politics and Hellenistic culture. Manetho's History may have been composed in Memphis, the ancient royal city with the greatest mix of cultures. The provincial temples of southern Upper Egypt, by contrast, are the ones which survive well. In the temple of Dendara (first century BC), the crypts for storage of cult equipment bear reliefs and inscriptions related to their contents. These include references to Khufu, the builder of the Great Pyramid (fourth dynasty, *c.*2550), the sixth-dynasty king Pepy I (*c.*2300–2250), and Thutmose III. The inscription mentioning the latter two is laid out as if it were a copy of an archaic text distinct from surrounding inscriptions.[40] While some of its content is comparable with the pedigrees in magical texts, objects bearing the name of Pepy I, particularly associated with his *sed* festival (jubilee), have been found throughout Egypt. They include a statue from Dendara temple site. A local link could have fostered this commemoration, which was perhaps also incorporated in the deployment of ancient artefacts or texts.

The best evidence for curation of ancient texts, including the self-presentations from Asyut mentioned above, comes from provincial sites in the Fayyum, a lakeside oasis west of the Nile Valley. Finds of papyri dating as late as the third century AD exhibit a vital, many-stranded indigenous culture. Narrowly 'historical' material is largely absent. The tradition of non-royal self-presentations had almost disappeared, and apart from those mentioned earlier, few of the texts copied were ancient, but they used old genres. At the least, they represent a tradition of 600 years of literary writing in the Egyptian Demotic script and language.

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[39] Nicolas-Christophe Grimal, *La stèle triomphale de Pi('ankh)y au Musée du Caire* (Cairo, 1981), pls I, V; and 'The Victory Stela of Piye', trans. Ritner in Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 367–85.

[40] François. Daumas, 'Le trône d'une statuette de Pépi Ier trouvé à Dendara', *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, 52 (1953), 163–72.

Many tales show a deep interest in the past, including such major figures as Imhotep and Djoser, used in emblematic fashion insofar as the latter is related to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, nearly 2,000 years after he lived. Numerous tales are set in a time of internal strife associated with generals and kings named Inaros and Petubastis, evidently inspired by the political fragmentation of the eighth-century and by fifth-century resistance to Persian rule. This curation and development of traditional writing and genres is attested from places that were perhaps outliers of major cities. Although Alexandria and Hellenism have been presented since antiquity as dominating Egypt in this period, the vital indigenous culture had a powerful awareness of its past, only some of which passed into Greek.

   A strand of development that became apparent during the Ptolemaic period is visible in a text known as the Demotic Chronicle, probably of the third century BC.[41] This consists of a set of cryptic oracles relating to the latest indigenous kings, together with elucidations in the form of predictions that are set fictionally in a preceding period. The kings will fail in their duty to the temples and hence merit their unfortunate end. Hope is pinned on a saviour who will emerge from Heracleopolis—a city emblematic of traditional values since the Middle Kingdom. The Demotic Chronicle thus uses history, with a good knowledge of events, for a semi-apocalyptic moralizing statement. Such strategies were widespread in later Mediterranean antiquity and are cross-culturally common. The earlier example, of the Middle Kingdom prophesied from the Old Kingdom (mentioned above), had the safe perspective of a regained order, whereas the Chronicle is ambiguously sited and looks to an unpredictable future.

ROCK INSCRIPTIONS AND GRAFFITI

A mode of commemoration common to kings and others was the rock relief, inscription, or graffito—a form that often mixed pictorial and textual elements. Significant examples are found from late Predynastic to Ptolemaic times and from central Sudan and the far west of the Egyptian desert to the Euphrates in Syria (known only from mentions in Egypt).[42] The same rocks were often carved repeatedly, both exploiting favourable surfaces and creating a dialogue with the past. Some inscriptions are as elaborate as formal ones, occasionally with content that would be unconventional in temple monuments. A striking instance is the Ptolemaic period Famine Stela on Sehel Island in the First

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[41] Friedhelm Hoffmann and Joachim F. Quack, *Anthologie der demotischen Literatur* (Berlin/Münster 2007), 183–91.

[42] See A. J. Peden, *The Graffiti of Pharaonic Egypt* (Leiden, 2001). Additional examples are often discovered.

Cataract, which tells a fictional tale of seven lean years caused by the failure to tithe local products to Khnum, the local god and lord of the inundation. This is set in the reign of Djoser, about 2,500 years earlier.[43] An historical text could thus be a 'forgery', like many English monastic charters, and for comparable reasons relating to revenues, but the intersection of the fictional, literary, and inscriptional was notably complex in Egypt. Whether anyone was meant to believe the content of the Famine Stela is unknown, and perhaps its historicizing of the cataract landscape, which had been intensively used in Djoser's period, could have been achieved irrespective of how, or if, it was read.

Unlike many inscriptions within Egypt, rock reliefs were in principle accessible to any literate person who passed by. (This need not be so, as with the vast inscription of Darius at Bisitun in Iran, which is inaccessible on a cliff face; see Mario Liverani in this volume.) As such, they spoke publicly to posterity, constituting a powerful form of history-writing that made spatial claims to presence and domination, notably in reliefs in Sinai of early dynastic and Old Kingdom kings smiting their enemies. On a rock-face, such claims are peremptory, although vulnerable to ill-wishers. Exported artefacts, most of which would have been diplomatic gifts carrying similar messages to those discussed above for knives and spearheads, were subject to negotiation and vagaries of preservation. The practice of inscribing rocks was common to the ancient Near East as well as Egypt, and it impressed Greek and Roman writers.

CONCLUSION

Many writers create synthesizing histories, yet whatever they may wish their presentations are not definitive because history is interpretive. The varieties of discourse on the past that can be recovered or modelled for Egypt were comparably diverse. The narrative excerpts of Manetho have no parallel in indigenous texts, whose only syntheses seem to have been annals, king lists, and anecdotes organized around them. This absence of formal extended exegesis of the past does not signify a lack of involvement with history or with creating historical meaning in the present for the future. The past was a moral, cultural, and political resource. It was visibly and materially actual, and it was decipherable through the writing that pervaded monuments and artefacts. The largest pyramids—the most awe-inspiring surviving Egyptian structures—belong to the Old Kingdom and were ancient sites to be visited, commented on, and used to inspire new buildings no later than the Middle Kingdom. Historical writing had a setting in places and practices of written and monumental discourse. This significance of

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[43] 'The Famine Stela', trans. Ritner in Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, 386–91.

the built and inscribed environment for history is perhaps the most powerful Egyptian contribution to historiography in Western traditions. It also has broader implications.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

*c.*5000–3000 BC	Predynastic
*c.*3500–3200 BC	Naqada II
*c.*3200–2950 BC	Naqada IIIA–B
*c.*2950–2575 BC	First–Third dynasties (Early Dynastic)
*c.*2575–2150 BC	Fourth–Eighth dynasties (Old Kingdom)
*c.*2150–1980 BC	Ninth–Eleventh dynasties (First Intermediate period)
*c.*1980–1630 BC	Eleventh–Thirteenth dynasties (Middle Kingdom)
*c.*1630–1520 BC	Fourteenth–Seventeenth dynasties (Second Intermediate period)
*c.*1540–1070 BC	Eighteenth–Twentieth dynasties (New Kingdom)
*c.*1070–715 BC	Twenty-First–Twenty-Fifth dynasties (Third Intermediate period)
715–332 BC	Twenty-Fifth–Thirtieth dynasties, Second Persian period (Late period)
332–305 BC	Macedonian period
305–30 BC	Ptolemaic period
30 BC–AD 395	Roman period

KEY HISTORICAL SOURCES

As indicated in the text, ancient 'historical works' are rare. Only selected references are given above. Most material cited without reference can be found through the publications listed here.

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Chapter 4

Historiography in Ancient Israel

John Van Seters

Historiography in the Hebrew Bible is a narration of past events in the history of a people called *Israel*, set within a chronological framework extending from the time of human and national origins to the end of the monarchy. Although in form it resembles modern historiography, it is fundamentally different in certain important respects. When dealing with biblical historiography we must set aside any modern notions of reconstructing a past based upon the science of source criticism and the historian's use of archives, or distinctions between contemporary documentary evidence or first-hand testimony of events, and traditional myths and legends, in judging degrees of historical probability. The Hebrew Bible knows nothing about such a manner of presentation of its history. What passes for a history of the Israelites from Genesis to 2 Kings is a narrative based upon a body of traditions native to a variety of groups that inhabited the highlands of Palestine, as well as some foreign myths and legends, which have been collected and shaped by biblical writers into the story of a people. The earliest version of this history was, in turn, expanded and reshaped progressively by subsequent writers until it reached its present form. Even after this final version was complete, a separate 'revised' history was presented in 1–2 Chronicles. At every stage of this reconstruction and revision, the historians were motivated by new conceptions of what constitutes the nature and identity of the people of Israel. Such a story was oblivious to anachronism, and ancient historians freely invented much of their narrative to a degree that would disqualify it as history for modern historians.

In spite of the diversity of authorship, one can identify a number of common concerns of the writers in their uses of the past in biblical history. Primary among these is the formation of a communal identity, *Israel*, grounded in traditions of origin and national destiny. Since these origins are understood to be based in the actions of a particular deity, such as the divine deliverance from Egypt or the selection of an ancestor to be the progenitor of a special nation, the history is imbued with theological causality throughout. Divine intervention in human affairs is the norm, and events have an inevitable teleological purpose. Also closely related to the construction of communal identity are the etiologies and

legitimization of institutions, such as the Temple, priesthood, and monarchy. Once this basic form of the people's 'history' was created, it attracted not only major revisions and expansions from time to time, but also secondary additions reflecting a variety of narrower concerns and 'lessons from the past'.

Because the biblical historians are all anonymous and the boundaries of their works within Genesis to 2 Kings are not clearly marked, there has long been debate about the literary critical analysis of this corpus. However, it is not appropriate in an essay of this kind to detail such a discussion, so that I will merely follow my own critical analysis. Furthermore, while it is the case that, in the past, some scholars have attempted to use the distinction from classical historiography between the histories of *recent* events and *antiquarian* history, and to find within the story of David some examples of contemporary eye-witness accounts, this distinction is generally not valid. With few exceptions, such as some parts of Ezra-Nehemiah, we are dealing with *antiquarian* history in the Hebrew Bible. Only in the Hellenistic period, with 1 Maccabees, do we have the kind of military history resembling the Greek model of *recent* history.

The nature and scope of the history in Genesis to 2 Kings has been obscured by the traditional division between the Pentateuch (Genesis to Deuteronomy) and the historical books (Joshua to 2 Kings). This division, in the past, has led to a quite different approach to the compositional history of the Pentateuch from that of the historical books, and to a lively debate about the literary limits of each historian's work, and when and by whom the sections of the Old Testament were actually written. The view that has won broad acceptance is that Deuteronomy belongs to the following historical books (Joshua to 2 Kings) as a kind of ideological introduction to what is called 'the Deuteronomistic History' (DtrH), and its author is known as the Deuteronomist (Dtr).[1] This leaves a Tetrateuch (Genesis to Numbers) which is a combination of two basic 'documents': one lay or non-priestly (the so-called Yahwist or J) and one priestly (P). How these relate to each other and how the two together relate to Deuteronomy and DtrH is still a matter of scholarly dispute. My own solution is to propose that DtrH is the earliest of these histories; it was supplemented by J in Genesis to Numbers, and this was further augmented by P.[2] In what follows I will treat these three anonymous historians in this order, and refer to them with the abbreviated letter by which they are known in modern scholarship. Finally, I will also note the historical tradition of the biblical books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah which challenges and revises the earlier historical tradition of the Hebrew Bible.

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[1] This is the thesis advocated by Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic Historian* (Sheffield, 1981); see also Thomas Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History* (London, 2005).

[2] These issues are treated more extensively in John Van Seters, *The Pentateuch*: *A Social-Science Commentary* (Sheffield, 1999). Compare also Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York, 1992).

THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY

As the earliest historical narrative of the Bible, DtrH presents the history of the people of Israel from their origin in the wilderness, after their rescue from the oppression of Egypt under the leadership of Moses, through the conquest of the Promised Land under Joshua, their life in the land of Israel under the 'judges', the rise of a united monarchy under Saul, David, and Solomon, the split into two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and the histories of these two states down to the eventual demise of both kingdoms. This history is treated as an object lesson in obedience and disobedience to the 'law of Moses' given to them by the national god, Yahweh, and tells of the consequences that resulted from breaching this 'constitution'. It is the anachronistic reference to this collection of laws that gives the clue to the socio-historical context of the work as originating in a religious reform movement in the time of King Josiah of Judah (late seventh century BC), which was based upon the 'discovery' of a 'book of the law' (2 Kgs 22–23). Scholars have identified this law-book as the code of laws in Deuteronomy (Deut. 12–26), introduced by a prologue of exhortations by Moses (chs 6–8), and a concluding series of threats for violation of these laws (chapter 28). The historian (Dtr) took up this law-book in the early sixth century BC, expanded it with some comments upon the wilderness journey (chs 1–3) and the circumstances in which the law was given by the god Yahweh through Moses (chs 5, 9–10), and established a link to the conquest and settlement of the Promised Land through the appointment of Joshua to be the successor of Moses after his death.

For Dtr, Deuteronomy thus served as an exposition on the origin of the people of Israel under a solemn covenant with their god, Yahweh, the terms of which were set forth in the laws of the Decalogue and the Mosaic code. The deity was thereby bound to his promise to give the people of Israel the land of the aboriginal population, 'the Amorites', and to ensure their possession and prosperity in it, in return for obedience to the law. In this way Josiah's reform programme was anachronistically construed as the constitutional basis of the nation from the very beginning under Moses, the lawgiver. What follows in Joshua to 2 Kings is the story of the way in which the people and their leaders either complied with, or violated, these laws, and the consequences of their actions through the various periods of their history.

Dtr represents the time of Joshua as a period of complete fidelity to the covenant by the people throughout the lifetime of Joshua (Josh. 1–11), during which they are completely successful in gaining control of the entire Promised Land. Joshua's career ends with his warning the people about breaking covenant loyalty with Yahweh and with a foreboding about the future (Josh. 23), and the history of the judges that follows illustrates the consequences of not heeding this admonition. For the period following Joshua, the historian has taken up a number of

traditions about popular tribal heroes who achieved fame for some brave act of defiance against a foreign oppressor and, in spite of limited forces, achieved an unusual victory over superior forces (Judg. 3–16).

Dtr puts these stories into a conceptual framework that begins with an ideological introduction (Judg. 2:6–3:6), suggesting that after the generation of Joshua and his contemporaries, the next generation forgot the deeds of Yahweh and 'did what was evil in his sight': namely, serving other gods. As a consequence, Yahweh gave them into submission to their enemies, who oppressed them. Only then would they appeal to Yahweh for help, and he would then send them a deliverer who would rescue them. They would remain faithful for that generation, only to fall back into their evil ways with the death of the deliverer. The highly diverse and independent stories of heroes are made to fit this repetitive scheme by assigning a generation of forty years to each 'judge', as the heroes are called, and the story about each act of deliverance is construed as the divine response to the people's repentance and cry for help. Instead of being merely local stories of no fixed date, the judges are fitted into a generational chronology of forty years each, and made leaders of the people as a whole. Thus Dtr has created a 'period of the Judges' between the time of the conquest and the rise of the monarchy, which is made to support his ideology of history.

The account of the rise of the monarchy and the story of the first three kings of a 'United Monarchy' over the whole people of Israel represents the next major phase of this history (1 Sam. 8–1 Kgs 11). At the very outset of the monarchy Dtr expresses a deep ambivalence, through Samuel as spokesman for the deity, about this institution which can only succeed to the degree that the king is obedient to Yahweh's laws and faithful to his covenant. This is in stark contrast to the other major powers of the Near East, where the monarchy represents the only viable form of government instituted by the gods, and all the major historiographic texts of Mesopotamia and Egypt are intended to show how the king is the agent or embodiment of the divine will on earth.

Saul, the first king, begins well as the god's anointed leader to deliver the people from the Philistines, but as a result of disobedience to a divine command, his dynasty is rejected, and another (David), 'a man after [god's] own heart' (1 Sam. 13:14), arises within Saul's own entourage as a champion against the Philistines. After Saul's ignominious defeat at the hands of the Philistines, David replaces him and becomes king of the entire land. He is quite successful in subduing all his enemies and bringing peace to the land, as well as establishing Jerusalem as the capital city. David is the one exemplary monarch who completely obeyed the god's laws throughout his entire life, as Dtr never tires of repeating in the rest of his history. As a reward for this obedience the god promises that his descendants will always sit on the throne in Jerusalem. David, who wishes to build a temple of cedar for the ark, the repository of the divine law, will not do so, but his son and successor (Solomon) will do it instead.

Solomon fulfils David's wish and the god's promise by building the Temple for the ark. At the same time the story of Solomon's Temple brings to the fore another major Dtr principle: that the Temple in Jerusalem should be the one place chosen by Yahweh to place his Name, and the god's presence, in the symbolism of the ark, makes it the only legitimate sanctuary. This claim was part of Josiah's reform movement in *c.* 625 BC, so that it is entirely anachronistic for the time of Solomon. There were, of course, many Yahweh temples throughout Israel and Judah until their abolition by Josiah. Furthermore, the Temple that Dtr describes as built by Solomon is largely an ideological construct. It may be reminiscent of the Temple at the end of the monarchy, but it has become highly idealized. Furthermore, one would expect from the language of the early prophets and Psalms that the object of veneration in the inner sanctuary is a seated figure of Yahweh as Israel's divine king, not unlike other Near Eastern temples. Instead, in Dtr's presentation the divine presence is represented by the ark: a box that contains the laws of the covenant as presented in Deuteronomy. It is this constitution, expressing the will of the deity, that is enshrined at the centre of the state. In short, Dtr wrote the history of Solomon's Temple to establish the historical legitimacy for the centralization of worship in Jerusalem, and for the whole reform movement reflected in the Deuteronomic law of Josiah's time.

The rest of Dtr's history (1 Kgs 12–2 Kgs 25) deals with the two parallel kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It first describes the circumstances under which the 'United Kingdom' became divided into two quite unequal parts, with the larger northern kingdom of Israel under a new dynasty, and a southern kingdom of Judah under the house of David. It then recounts the succession of the kings of both realms until the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians, and later the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah by the Babylonians. Superimposed on the recounting of these two histories is the ideological framework in which each of the kings of both realms is judged as to whether he pleased or displeased the deity according to the requirements of the Deuteronomic law, with David used as the model of the righteous king, and Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, as the model of religious apostasy among the northern kings.

Some general remarks about this history are in order. This is a national history spanning the entire period from the time of Israel's origin in the wilderness to the end of the two monarchies. There is nothing comparable in Near Eastern historiography that presents the life of a nation in this kind of chronological narrative, giving the moral and ideological meaning of historical events. It is true that Dtr can sometimes take up an older Near Eastern form or genre and use it within his work. Thus the invasion of the land of Canaan under Joshua imitates the accounts of the wars of conquest by the Assyrians that occurred in the late eighth and seventh centuries BC, even borrowing some quite specific

motifs and language.³ Likewise, the two king lists of Judah and Israel, similar to those used in Mesopotamia (described by Piotr Michalowski in this volume), are used for the chronological framework of the history of the monarchy. However, neither in Egypt, nor in Mesopotamia, nor among the Hittites is there a history of the nation that goes beyond the records of the deeds of kings or the chronological succession of their reigns. The virtues or failures of the people within these other nations are never mentioned.

DtrH also articulates a strong and coherent sense of national and communal identity. The criteria and limits of this identity are the shared history from origin to the end of Israel's national life, its common customs, laws and institutions and what should be avoided as foreign and intrusive, and its religious foundation in a covenant with the one national deity, Yahweh. The people's relationship to the land as Yahweh's land, promised and given to them as an 'inheritance', is also basic to this sense of identity. The land becomes part of the whole ideological construct, so that to step outside of the religious and cultural boundaries of Israelite identity is to forfeit any right to the land. A major legacy of biblical historiography is the fact that the ideology of identity becomes a fundamental aspect of its narrative structure and presentation of the people's past. There is nothing comparable to this in the rest of Near Eastern historiography,⁴ but the creation of a people's identity by an appeal to their past has become a fundamental feature of historiography in national histories down to modern times.

At this point it should be noted that the biblical historian presents us with the apex of this identity in the form of an impressive 'United Kingdom' of Israel and Judah under David and Solomon, abounding in wealth and monumental architecture, and controlling much of the Levant from the Euphrates to the borders of Egypt. However, the archaeological evidence for the tenth century BC in Palestine presents a quite different picture.⁵ It is becoming increasingly clear that the two states—Israel in the northern highlands and Judah in the southern highlands of Palestine—had quite distinct origins and there never was, in fact, a 'United Kingdom'. Saul was probably only the leader of a small chiefdom in the tribal region of Benjamin in Israel, and David arose as the dynastic founder of a quite modest chiefdom in Judah, with no historical connection to Saul. It was

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³ John Van Seters, 'Joshua's Campaign of Canaan and Near Eastern Historiography', *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* (1990/2), 1–12; and Nadav Na'aman, 'The "Conquest of Canaan" in the Book of Joshua and in History', in Israel Finkelstein and Na'aman (eds.), *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological & Historical Aspects of Early Israel* (Jerusalem, 1994), 218–81.

⁴ See the new comprehensive study by Kenton L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the Study of Ethnic Sentiments and their Expression in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1998); and E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., *Narrative History and Ethnic Boundaries: The Deuteronomistic Historian and the Creation of Israelite National Identity* (Atlanta, 1993).

⁵ Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origins of Its Sacred Texts* (New York, 2002).

therefore the Judean historian, Dtr, living in the early sixth century, who took up the local Saul traditions from the neighbouring region of Benjamin and combined them with the Judean David traditions, making David, the Judean, heir to the throne of Saul, the Israelite. The resulting 'United Kingdom' was thus an ideological construct, intended to create the foundations of a unified identity of the Israelite people. Since both Judah and Israel shared the same national deity, the Deuteronomic law became the constitution for 'all Israel', and the one legitimate national Temple that housed this law became the religious centre for the entire people. Thus, with only a few local traditions, Dtr has created the fiction of a single people of Israel out of two quite separate entities, and reads this understanding of Israel back into the earlier periods of Moses in the wilderness, the conquest by Joshua of both north and south, and the time of the Judges. The biblical history of Israel is, therefore, above all else, the story of this ideological construction.

We have likewise noted above that divine intervention in the affairs of the nation is a major component in the historian's understanding of causality. In this respect, biblical historiography is said to differ significantly from the later classical historians, though it is similar to the perspective of many Near Eastern historical texts.[6] Yet this observation needs some qualification. The biblical historian could make a distinction between immediate and apparent causes of events, and the final cause in the will or purpose of the deity. Thus the immediate cause of the break-up of the northern and southern tribes into two kingdoms is presented as the foolish decision of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, but it is said at the same time to have been 'a turn of events brought about by Yahweh' (1 Kgs 12:15) as a consequence of Solomon's sin in the matter of his mixed marriages, and in conformity with a prophetic judgement on Solomon. The will of Yahweh is the final cause, determined long before the event itself. This distinction between short-term and long-term levels of causation is not limited to this passage alone, so that divine intervention in biblical historical narratives may be a little more sophisticated than it is often presented. At the same time, classical historians such as Herodotus could also hint at divine intervention in human affairs in a manner not so different from that suggested here.[7]

Closely related to the notion of divine intervention is the role played by prophecy in Dtr's historiography, especially in the books of Kings. This is not surprising, given the importance of the institution of prophecy during the time of the monarchy. One also finds that a king's consultation of seers and omens

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[6] E. W. Nicholson, 'Story and History in the Old Testament', in Samuel E. Balentine and John Barton (eds.), *Language, Theology and the Bible: Essays in Honour of James Barr* (Oxford, 1994), 135–50.
[7] See the battle of Artemisium, Herod. 8.8–13; and John Van Seters, 'Is There any Historiography in the Hebrew Bible? A Hebrew-Greek Comparison', *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*, 28:2 (2002), 1–25.

before important military events or the building of temples was a common feature in Mesopotamian historical texts. In Greek historiography, Herodotus likewise uses the warnings of wise counsellors, the predictions of mantics, and the consultation of oracles as important structural devices throughout his history. In the biblical book of Kings, the pattern of prophecy and fulfilment, always at the instigation of Yahweh, creates a strong sense of the divine control of events. When a prophecy and its fulfilment embrace several generations, the prophecy-fulfilment pattern may suggest a larger divine plan and national destiny. Historiography itself can then be understood as a form of prophecy that can disclose the future. In later times, as a consequence, prophets were thought of as historians and historians as prophets, and hence the biblical history from Joshua to 2 Kings became known as the Former Prophets.

THE YAHWIST'S HISTORY

The Yahwist (J) wrote his work in the mid sixth century BC living among the exiled Jews in Babylon. His contribution to Israelite historiography was to expand DtrH by adding his narrative of Genesis—Numbers to Deuteronomy as an historical prologue.[8] By extending the national history of DtrH back into primeval times and the origins of humanity, J transformed the national history into a universal history. The only way that this could be done was by using myths of origins, set within a framework of genealogies, which created a temporal sequence down to 'historical' times.[9] J shares such origin myths with other peoples of antiquity, from whom some were directly or indirectly adopted. These include accounts of creation, the origins and invention of culture, the age of semi-divine heroes, the great Flood, and the building of the first cities. Some of these resemble those of Mesopotamia, others those of ancient Greece. Yet the way in which he orders these materials in his historical scheme of things has great significance for his articulation of universal history.[10]

In the book of Genesis, J takes up the notion of a creation of humanity, as in Mesopotamia, but he restricts the number of persons created to one human pair, from whom the rest of humanity is derived, and establishes a direct genealogical connection to the time of the Flood. Even when this disaster results in a new beginning, as in Mesopotamia, it is not a new creation but the continuation of

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[8] For an extensive discussion of the Yahwist as historian, see my books, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Louisville, KY, 1992); and *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-Numbers* (Louisville, KY, 1994).

[9] This form of *antiquarian* history is common in classical historiography, the best extant example being Dionysius' *Antiquities of Rome*. See Emilio Gabba, *Dionysius and the History of Archaic Rome* (Berkeley, 1991).

[10] For fuller discussion see Van Seters, *Prologue to History*, 47–99.

one family, whose members are then presented as the progenitors of the whole human race. It is only at several generations removed from this beginning, and in one of the branches of the genealogical tree, that the ancestors of the Israelites come into focus. This scheme results in quite a remarkable conceptual unity—creating a universal history that is entirely lacking in the other origin traditions of antiquity, and it has a very powerful influence on later notions of universal history.

To support this universalistic perspective, J has identified the national god of the Israelites, Yahweh, as the creator god—the only god in control of all human affairs and the natural world. This suggests a common moral order in the world to which all are responsible, and a common human experience beyond the peculiar customs and institutions of the one people, Israel. This universal moral order, in the form of stories about crimes and punishment, is the fundamental theme of the primeval history. The universal judgement of the Flood, in particular, gives this history an enduring moral and teleological understanding of the world that supports notions about the end, or goal, of history. If the DtrH is concerned with the history of one nation whose destiny is determined by a national law code under the aegis of a national god, then J presents a universal moral order under the blessing or judgement of a universal deity.

The stories of the people's ancestors—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons (and one daughter)"[11]—make up the larger part of Genesis (12–50). For the purpose of filling out this period of the nation's pre-history, the historian J has taken up a body of local traditions about ancestors and has arranged them into a genealogical structure of successive generations and, by means of an itinerary of their wanderings, has associated them with the whole region of the land of Israel. In a manner similar to early Greek tradition, the ancestors are set forth in four generations from Abraham to the twelve sons of Jacob, which encompass not only the forefathers of the tribes of Israel (= Jacob), but also the closely related neighbouring peoples of Aram (Syria), Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Arabs. By contrast, the 'Canaanite' peoples are viewed as part of the older indigenous population among whom they sojourned.

According to J, already prior to Moses, the deity brought Israel's ancestor, Abraham, out of a foreign land and determined the destiny of his offspring by the promise of nationhood, land, and prosperity. These promises are repeated and transmitted to each successive generation, so that they now give historical meaning to the patriarchal period as a whole and to the various episodes within it. It is in this way that J has created an important new dimension to the Israelite-Jewish sense of identity, because J adds to Dtr's criteria for national identity that of an *ethnic* identity based upon the myth of generic descent from

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[11] The daughter plays no role as an ancestress of a tribe.

a common set of ancestors to whom the deity Yahweh has given an unconditional promise of a great nation. Even after the demise of the state and the loss of a land, the people in exile and diaspora (J's own social context) could maintain a sense of identity through their connection to the sons of Jacob/Israel and their aspirations expressed in the patriarchal promises.

The story of Jacob and his sons in Genesis reflects the inclusion of those within the people of Israel from a northern perspective, with Joseph and Benjamin the favoured sons, reflecting the heartland of the northern highlands, and the rest of the sons the more peripheral regions. This includes Judah, who is only the fourth son of Leah, the unloved wife of Jacob. These traditional stories about the birth of Jacob's offspring seem to reflect the political realities of the reigns of Omri and Ahab in the early to mid ninth century. The Joseph story, however, has been modified by J to give a more prominent role to Judah by displacing Reuben, the eldest son, as the one who wins reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers. Notions about a twelve-tribe unity, while already reflected in DtrH, come to play an increasingly important role as an expression of communal identity.

This articulation of ethnic identity in the patriarchal age is tied, by means of the Joseph story and the sojourn in Egypt, to the originally separate tradition of the people's origin in Egypt. It is in this period of the sojourn that the 'sons of Jacob' grow into a nation within a nation and constitute a threat to Egypt's security, which leads to their expulsion. The story of their oppression in Egypt, their deliverance and exodus, their wilderness wanderings and their arrival on the borders of the 'Promised Land', is construed as a biography of Moses.[12] In almost every episode in J's presentation of the story, Moses plays a dominant role. This is a quite remarkable development in historiographic form that has no real precedent, except in a limited way in the Babylonian legend of Sargon.[13] The whole of the historical period that forms the 'constitutional age' of the people is set within the limits of the lifetime of Moses, the founder and lawgiver. Not only does this allow J to subsume DtrH's prologue, Deuteronomy, within this presentation as a recapitulation of events dealt with in his history, but it gives J the opportunity of modifying and qualifying his understanding of the wilderness period and its laws in his own way. Yet this time of Moses is linked with the identity and destiny of a people who are the descendants of the patriarchs, from its beginning when Yahweh, the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, delivers his people from the hands of the Egyptians, to its end when Moses views from Mount Nebo the land promised to the patriarchs.

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[12] For a more extensive discussion of J's treatment of this period, see my *Life of Moses.*

[13] This is a fictional autobiography about how the Babylonian king, Sargon the Great, was rescued from the Euphrates River as an infant in a basket to become the ruler of an empire.

THE PRIESTLY HISTORY

The Priestly historian (P), writing in the period of reconstruction in Judah in the late fifth century BC, has expanded and modified the earlier history of J in a number of significant ways. To J's primeval history P has added, as a prologue, a cosmology that includes the origins, not only of human, animal, and plant life as in J, but also the rest of the cosmos. This is done in a series of pronouncements by the one deity distributed over the course of six days. When this basic order has been established and confirmed as 'very good', the seventh day is consecrated as a holy day of rest, in imitation of the creator's rest from his creative labours.

It has long been observed that P's presentation of creation is greatly at variance with that of J in Genesis (2:4b–3:24), both in the manner of presentation and also in the ordering of the individual acts of creation. This is largely due to the fact that P has taken up the cosmogonic myth of origins and demythologized or rationalized various features of it, so that dividing the waters of the abyss is no longer the mythical slaying of the demonic monster; the word that empowers 'earth' to bring forth her fruit is a pale reflection of the great mother goddess; the sun and moon who 'rule' the day and night have, in P, become great lamps in place of gods. Thus, the 'genealogy of heaven and earth' (2:4) follows the fixed succession of events that one finds in theogonies, but in a rationalized form, to make it conform to the monotheistic theology of the P tradition.

P's prologue in this universal history begins with the creation of time itself by virtue of the god's creation of light that makes possible the first day. This creation of time is then used as the temporal measurement for the rest of the days of creation. Furthermore, the primary function of the heavenly bodies is to regulate times and seasons, months and years. The sacred days, especially the Sabbath, are reckoned as part of this cosmic order, and thus history as chronology is merely an aspect of the cosmic or natural order of events. Of course, this legitimizes and upholds the role of the priests as the guardians of this cosmic order. Once this ideological foundation for precise chronology has been established, P attempts to order the rest of the history into a strict chronological scheme.

In the Babylonian antiquarian tradition, the chronology of the world was fixed by the descent of kingship from heaven at the beginning of time, its renewal after the Flood, and its strict chronological succession to historical times. A later variant of this tradition tells of the creation of the king as a special human being to rule over the rest of ordinary humanity by the transmission of divine attributes from the various deities to equip him for the task of governance. P has taken over this myth, even retaining the hint of the divine council: 'Let us make humans in our image and after our likeness and let them have dominion . . .' (Gen. 1:26). Yet the myth has been democratized to apply to all humanity and its relationship to the rest of creation. Thus universal history is no longer determined by the chronology of a line of kings, as in Babylon, but by humanity from Adam to his

offspring. It is a single history of all humanity under a single unnamed deity who controls the whole of the cosmos.

Moreover, P takes over J's rudimentary scheme of genealogical chronology of seven generations for the antediluvian period from Adam to Noah and from Noah to Abraham, and increases these to ten generations each. With these he combines a strict chronological succession, as in the Babylonian king lists but, instead of the length of a king's reign, he gives the total lifespan of the ancestors and their age at the time of the birth of the eldest son to yield a precise chronology. The Babylonian tradition that the antediluvian kings ruled for very long periods, even thousands of years, is reflected in the very long lives of the antediluvian ancestors of Genesis 5. The chronology of J's Flood story is also modified to make the Flood one year in length and to fit it into the larger absolute chronology within the life of Noah. The lives of the patriarchs are likewise supplied with a precise chronology for the principal events in their lives, especially as they relate to births and deaths.[14]

Another important aspect of P's historiography is his attempt to periodize history into certain eras. This was already suggested to some extent by J's major divisions, but P heightens these in particular ways. The first period begins with the first human pair to whom the god extends his blessing of fruitfulness and an injunction to rule the Earth. Humanity is also given the fruits of the earth to eat, but not meat, and is thus vegetarian. This era extends to the time of the Flood. After the Flood, the god renews his blessing of fruitfulness to the survivors but now permits them to eat meat. Yet they are under new laws regarding homicide, to control the violence that led to the Flood, and laws concerning the non-consumption of blood with meat. An 'eternal covenant' is established with humanity in the form of a divine promise, confirmed by the sign of the rainbow, not to bring another Flood on the Earth. In both of these periods the term for deity is simply the generic term *Elohim*, 'god'.

Abraham, at the end of the tenth generation after the Flood, begins a new era with a new 'eternal covenant' for his descendants. The sign of this covenant is the rite of circumcision for all males, which is an obligation for all those who wish to remain within this covenant. To them are extended the promises of nationhood and land as with J, as well as the blessing of fruitfulness from creation. To Abraham is revealed the divine name of 'God Almighty' (*El Shaddai*), and all the patriarchs know the deity by this name and share this covenant.

The time of Moses begins yet another era. To Moses the deity reveals the sacred name of *Yahweh*, the name of the god of Israel. Yet P affirms through the words of the deity that this is the same god as El Shaddai of the patriarchs, and the covenantal promises to them are assured to the descendants whom he will rescue from Egypt. With Moses there is also an extended body of laws to mark this era. Yet in contrast to both Deuteronomy and J, little is said explicitly about a Sinai covenant, and some have denied that there is one in P. However, since

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[14] It was this precise chronology of P that permitted Bishop James Usher in the mid seventeenth century to date the creation of the world to 4004 BC.

P is essentially a supplement to both DtrH and J, it seems to me justifiable to assume that P takes over the notion of such a covenant. He even suggests that the sign of this covenant is the observance of the Sabbath (Exod. 31).

The largest addition that P makes to the prior history of J has to do with priestly matters of temple worship, purity laws, sacrifices, and festival regulations. This is directly related to the re-establishment of the priestly cultus in the Second Temple period. This is in sharp contrast to J, living in the Babylonian exile, who lays down a bare minimum of such observances, which may be kept without the need for any priesthood. Thus, in J, the 'tent of meeting' is merely an oracular tent where Moses receives revelations from the deity, but it has no priests and no cult and only a lay person, Joshua, associated with it. By contrast, this 'tent of meeting' or 'tabernacle' in P has become an elaborate portable temple with a large priesthood, sacrificial practice and liturgy, and it forms the centre of the people's life. The constitutional understanding of the people is revised by P into that of a 'theocracy'[15] in which there is a diarchy, consisting of a secular leader and a high priest. In the beginning, Moses is pre-eminent over Aaron, the high priest, because he is the medium of divine revelation of the whole system, but after Moses his successors, like Joshua, must take their direction from the high priest. There are various orders of priests and orders of laymen such that the whole community of the people, known as the 'congregation of Israel', is an elaborate organism. The social order and the cultic order belong to the cosmic order and the rule of god, all of which means that P's historical narrative gives priests an essential role in all spheres of social life. This is his historical legitimization of the roles of governor and high priest in the Jerusalem Temple-community of the Second Temple period.

P also adds another dimension to corporate identity beyond that in DtrH and J. Identity not only embraces the national identity of people and land with absolute commitment to Yahweh as in DtrH, and ethnic identity through the forefathers as in J. For P, identity also includes commitment to certain observances, such as circumcision, the keeping of the Sabbath and festivals and the food laws by all Jews, as well as the maintenance of the theocratic structures of the cult. This makes particular allowance for the diaspora Jews who can in this way maintain an identity as a people quite apart from life in the land of Palestine. It is now P's history that ensures the survival of this identity, no matter where Jews may live.

THE DAVID SAGA

As I indicated above, the figure of David is central to Dtr's historiography, but it includes only a small part of the biblical story of David. The largest part consists of what may be described as a 'saga' about David and his family, covering various episodes in his rise to power as Saul's successor, and the history of his reign to his

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[15] This is a term invented by the Jewish historian Josephus to describe this priestly law.

succession by Solomon.[16] For over a century most biblical scholars have regarded this composition as the work of a near contemporary of David and Solomon, based upon his own observations of the court. They viewed it as an example of historiography dealing with *recent* events, rivalling that of Herodotus centuries before his time.[17] In fact, however, it is a late addition to DtrH, containing many anachronisms that betray a Persian date (fourth century BC) and therefore it is fiction.[18] Nevertheless, it presents itself as a history of David's reign.

The presentation of David in the David Saga (DS) is in stark contrast with the idealization of David in DtrH. It is the David Saga that recounts David's affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah, to cover up the affair when David discovers that Bathsheba is pregnant with his child. When Amnon, David's eldest son, rapes his half-sister, David does nothing about it, with the result that it is Absalom, the girl's full brother, who murders Amnon in revenge. Later Absalom leads a rebellion against his father's rule and takes the throne, only to be defeated in a final showdown between his citizen army and David's mercenaries. In the end Solomon, a younger surviving son of David, gains the throne by a palace intrigue, by the murder of his older brother, and by disposing of his other enemies at court.

The David Saga, generally regarded as the finest prose in the Hebrew Bible, is pseudo-historiography embedded within the DtrH, with the intention of discrediting it. Many in the late Persian period hoped for a revival of the Judean monarchy and a continuation of the house of David. In my view, the object of DS was to present an anti-monarchic view of the house of David to discourage any hope of such a revival. It presents David as one who is no better than Ahab and Jeroboam, the most notorious of the kings of Israel. He is one who does 'what is evil in the eyes of Yahweh' and 'despises the word of Yahweh' (2 Sam. 11:26, 12:9), and his sons are likewise morally corrupt (2 Sam. 13). Solomon was not the true heir to the throne and the fulfilment of divine promise, but one who became king through the deception of the queen, Solomon's mother, and the prophet Nathan over the rightful claim of the elder brother (1 Kgs 1–2). This portrayal of a Near Eastern court is similar to Herodotus' treatment of the Persian monarchy. It seems clear that the author of DS has no sympathy for a revival of the Davidic dynasty as a form of communal identity.

Furthermore, DS is not concerned about special Deuteronomic laws, as in DtrH, or about the cultic regulations of P. He is primarily concerned with the violation of basic humanitarian standards, such as David's adultery and murder,

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[16] It includes most of the account of David's reign (2 Sam. 2:8–4:12, 9–20; 1 Kgs. 1–2), but also a large portion of his rise to power under Saul (1 Sam. 20:1–21:9, 22:6–23, 25–27, 29–30).

[17] See Gerhard von Rad, 'The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel', in id., *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (Edinburgh/London, 1966), 166–204.

[18] For details of the debate, see John Van Seters, *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (New Haven/London, 1983), 277–91; and John Van Seters, *The Biblical Saga of King David* (Winona Lake, Ind., 2009).

even against a non-Israelite 'Hittite'. He cares nothing for priestly pomp and ceremony, as when David's two high priests bring the ark down into the Kidron valley with a group of Levites to watch David and his entourage cross over the stream in their flight to the wilderness during Absalom's revolt. Yet they do not accompany David, and priests and ark are sent back to Jerusalem. This is a complete parody on the role of the ark in the story of Joshua's invasion, where the ark represents the divine presence in the crossing of the Jordan and in the conquest of Jericho (Jos. 3–6). It also contrasts with the Dtr's account of David's restoration of the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6). Nor does DS have anything positive to say about Israelite identity. Indeed, he treats both Israel and Judah as two separate entities that are often at enmity with each other up to the end of David's reign, and even Benjamin remains a separate unit under a member of the house of Saul. The kingdom is 'united' only in the person of the king and his private army of mercenaries. DS's whole approach to the David tradition seems to be anti-messianic and anti-nationalistic—a worldly wise perspective on life.

THE CHRONICLER AS HISTORIAN

Alongside the Primary History in Genesis to 2 Kings is another historical tradition that both supplements and rivals it: the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles (late fourth century BC). While much is taken over verbatim from the older history, especially from Samuel–Kings, much is also omitted or altered, many stories and new information added, and the whole perspective of the earlier history radically changed. These changes are so blatantly dominated by ideological and theological concerns that many scholars regard the work as pseudo-history or 'midrash'.[19] Yet the Chronicler (Chr), by his imitation of the earlier history and his frequent citation of sources, presents his work in a form that is intended to be taken as history, and was so regarded by later generations.

　　The book of 1 Chronicles begins with Adam, the first human, and extends its history to the time of Cyrus and the end of the Babylonian exile of the Jews (538 BC). The primeval history from the origins of humanity to the time of David is spanned by means of genealogies that have been gleaned largely from the Pentateuch, especially P, but some also from the earlier DtrH. These establish a continuity with humanity in general, and then with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the sons of Jacob, the tribal ancestors, with special attention to Judah, as well as to the royal house of David and the Levitical priesthood. In the case of these two institutions, the genealogies are carried beyond the timeframe of the books of Chronicles well into the Persian period. Within the genealogies are

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[19] The term was coined by Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (New York, 1957), 227, on the model of later Jewish writings, to mean the embellishment of biblical writings by means of moralistic and miraculous stories.

anecdotal remarks about the land settlement of the Israelite tribes so that they legitimate a territorial claim far beyond the bounds of the small province of Judah in the time of the historian.

This form of genealogical history is well attested within the classical antiquarian tradition. The Chronicler claims to have derived the genealogical history of chapters 1–8 from a 'Book of the Kings of Israel', although this does not correspond with any extant biblical book. The function of such genealogies is to fortify ethnic identity, support territorial claims on ancestral lands, and legitimize basic social institutions, both political and religious. To support these aims the older genealogies are greatly augmented with names from the families of the post-exilic period. The genealogical series ends with the names of families and of the Temple personnel (priests, Levites, and others) who returned from exile (chapter 9).

The history proper begins with an account of the death of Saul as a lead up to David and his reign (1 Chr. 10–29). All the previous history is omitted, or rather assumed, whereas David is made into the founder of the nation, together with its basic political and religious institutions, as a kind of second Moses. For this purpose Chr excises from the prior tradition all those elements that might reflect negatively on David's character—in particular virtually the whole of the David Saga. Instead, he gives to David the task of establishing the whole system of worship outlined by the Priestly Writer within the context of the new state and its capital in Jerusalem, along with all of the later developments of cult personnel and practice of the Second Temple period, which he ascribes anachronistically to David. The fact that the first Temple did not yet exist in David's time and was only built by his son Solomon leads Chr to suggest that David spent much of his time and effort making preparation for the future Temple, setting out the divinely revealed plan and gathering the materials, so that it was left to Solomon merely to execute the plan. The account of Solomon's reign is likewise idealized by the omission of anything derogatory. The result is that with the combined rule of David and Solomon, the theocracy of P is embedded in a 'Kingdom of God' with a son of David at its head. For Chr there can be only one legitimate kingdom and state centred in Jerusalem under a son of David, just as there can be only one Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem.

This leads him to focus his entire history on the Kingdom of Judah and to regard the Northern Kingdom of Israel as illegitimate and foreign from the start. He omits from his record the fact that the biblical books of Kings represent the inauguration of the Northern Kingdom as an act of Yahweh through his prophet Ahijah and open to the same possibility of divine approval as the dynasty of David. For Chr all the kings of Israel and the people who submit to their rule are religious rebels, whereas the true Israelites are those who are willing to leave their homeland in the north and settle in Judah. This includes all the true priests and Levites of Yahweh, so that there are no members of the true religion left in the north. This, of course, contradicts much of the witness of the books of Kings

and the prophetic books, which are therefore simply ignored. The term 'Israel' does not refer to a political entity in Chronicles but is intended as a religious designation that can be applied to Judah and its kings. Thus Israel may indeed include members of all the twelve tribes, as in the initial genealogy, but only those among them who have given their allegiance to Jerusalem and abandoned any religious and political claim to a centre in the north, thereby excluding Samaria and the Samaritans of Mount Gerizim. It is this crucial issue of identity in the Persian and Hellenistic periods to which Chr speaks.

This redefinition of Israelite identity comes to the fore most clearly in Chr's treatment of Hezekiah (2 Chr. 29–32). The fall of Samaria and the Northern Kingdom, which receives important attention from Dtr in Kings (2 Kgs 17) is ignored by Chr. Instead, Hezekiah, the contemporary Judean king, is presented as a kind of second David who completely purifies and restores the Temple worship after a period of neglect by the apostate Ahaz, his father, and then Hezekiah reunites the whole region of Israel from Beersheba to Dan under his control and in common worship at the Jerusalem Temple, in a great Passover celebration and in an extensive reform of both Judah and Israel. Chr completely ignores the existence of any other political or religious authority for the north, which had become an Assyrian province. Instead, Hezekiah is seen as re-establishing the Davidic–Solomonic precedent of a unified Israel and building continuity with the priestly ideology of the Persian period. The portrayal of Hezekiah's reform is an imitation of the Josiah reform in Kings, which is also repeated in Chronicles but on a lesser scale. Yet both reforms in Chronicles are divorced from any connection with the discovery of the book of the law. For Chr, the Mosaic law in its most extensive form (including P) was known and in force from the time of David onward, even if it was not always observed by some of the apostate kings. This is a radical departure from the whole ideology and perspective of the books of Kings.

Basic to understanding Chr's historiography is an appraisal of his use of sources. His most important source, if not his only source, for the whole period of the monarchy is the extant books of Samuel–Kings, which was a single work. Large parts of it are cited verbatim, especially as they have to do with David, Solomon, and the kings of Judah. The Northern Kingdom is ignored unless it directly involves a king of Judah. Yet when Chr treats this material from Samuel–Kings, he refers not to a single source but to a large number of different sources by various names. He also cites as sources twelve books that he attributes to prophets, most of whom are mentioned in Samuel–Kings. These books are so obviously spurious (prophets did not actually write books of any kind much before the exilic period) that scholars have dismissed those citations as a quirk of Chr's literary style.

I understand these references to multiple sources in a quite different way. In order to obscure the fact that he has only one source for the monarchy, Samuel–Kings, and to justify both his radical departures from this source and his

numerous fictions, Chr invents multiple sources, namely, numerous chronicles that did not exist and prophetic histories whose inspired writings, he hopes, will not be questioned. This legitimates the ideology of his history and its political and religious use for his own day. One other term that he uses for his sources is also instructive: he refers to the 'Midrash of the Book of Kings'. The Hebrew term *midrash* means 'investigation' or 'inquiry', from the verb *drš* 'to search', and as such *midrash* is the direct equivalent of the Greek term *historia*, 'history'. As Herodotus uses the term, it includes not merely historical narrative but wonders and marvels and colourful stories of past events. This fits very well a feature of Chronicles, which abounds in miraculous events and edifying tales. The whole-sale borrowing from older histories, the use of spurious sources, and the embellishment with stories for entertainment or edification, points strongly to the influence of Hellenistic historiography. It is a kind of bad historiography against which historians like Polybius protested,[20] but it was still highly influential and very popular. Nevertheless, Chronicles became part of the canonical collection as history and, as such, it played an important role in shaping later Jewish and Christian historical thought.

A major literary extension to the national historical tradition appears in the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, which should be treated as a single work. It begins where Chronicles leaves off: namely, with the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC, which brings to an end the enforced exile of the Jews in Babylon and inaugurates the Persian period of rule over their homeland in Judah. The restoration of the Temple under Zerubbabel and the rebuilding of the walls of the city of Jerusalem under Nehemiah, the Jewish governor appointed by Artaxerxes I, in the mid fifth century BC, along with the accompanying reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra the scribe, are all attributed to the initiatives of leaders from the diaspora and the returning exiles. Much is made of the lists of names of the returnees, both lay and priests, as the nucleus of the real people of Israel and their claim to the land. The work reflects intolerance towards those who reside in the land and who do not share their form of exclusivist Yahwism, and who fraternize with other communities of the region, especially those of the northern region of Samaria. This is similar to the perspective of Chronicles, and one reason why they are closely associated. Both Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles are to be dated to a century later in the late Persian, or more likely, early Hellenistic period, but there is much debate about whether Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles belong to the same author or 'school'. At the very least a knowledge of, and dependence upon, Ezra-Nehemiah by the Chronicler may be safely assumed. They share much of the same ideological perspective.

Unlike Chronicles, which is based upon a prior history, Ezra-Nehemiah appears to be made up of several separate documents, which consist of 'official' Aramaic documents—royal edicts and official letters and communications

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[20] Polybius, *Histories*, 9.2.

(whether genuine or spurious), numerous lists of priests and lay persons for various purposes, so-called memoirs of Nehemiah and Ezra, and some other possible documents. These have all been combined and set within a narrative by an author whose style and language is similar to Chr. The documents are used as the basis of authority and validation, both of actions within the history and of the historical narrative itself, showing a new consciousness about the importance of historical sources. Nehemiah's memoirs are written for public display to legitimate his actions. Ezra, the scribe, brings from Babylon the book of the law of Moses which he is authorized by the Persian authorities to enforce, and from which he reads and instructs the people. The royal edicts and official letters, the legal documents and lists of persons and property all carry authority and the legitimization of rights and privileges. Even in the matter of the divorce and expulsion of foreign wives with their children, a list must be compiled of the offenders. The history is thus primarily the presentation and interpretation of these documents, whether real or spurious. They are essential for articulating the identity of the community and for the exclusion of those deemed unfit to belong to it.

The principal focus of the history is the re-establishment of the Temple and the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, and a series of events that make Jerusalem the defining centre of the community of Israel. The centralization and purification of the Temple cultus in Jerusalem according to Deuteronomic principles was already a major theme within the DtrH, especially in Samuel–Kings. This became the case even more so for Chr in his treatment of the Judean monarchy. Ezra-Nehemiah adds to this theme the inauguration of the Second Temple and the restored city after the radical rupture of the Babylonian exile. The fate of the Temple and the city becomes the defining theme of Jewish history, as one sees in the later works of 1 and 2 Maccabees and Josephus as well. The sacred place offers a religious and historical centre for the identity of the Jewish people.

CONCLUSION

The biblical historiography that I have described above was the product of a small state on the periphery of larger civilizations, and it was produced during that period in its history when the state was under foreign subjection by the great powers.[21] Yet there is no evidence that it borrowed its historiography from the Assyrians, Babylonians, or Egyptians, even if the biblical writers adopted

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[21] It was once thought by many scholars that history-writing arose in Israel during the time of David and Solomon as a reflection of historical consciousness at the beginning of its statehood. This view can no longer be supported and is largely abandoned. For a discussion of this see, Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 209–48, and Van Seters, *The Biblical Saga of King David*.

some of the literary forms from these neighbouring civilizations. Hebrew historiography has much more in common with the classical world of the eastern Mediterranean, and yet the historiography of the one is not directly derived from the other; any direct interaction comes about perhaps only with the rise of Hellenism. As our survey has attempted to show, biblical historiography articulated various understandings of communal identity for a people in crisis, trying to maintain their cultural and religious heritage by a narration of the past. It established certain themes and perspectives having to do with absolute loyalty to a single national deity expressed in law and covenant, customs and cultic practice, festivals and rites of initiation. It tied identity to a 'Promised Land' and the myth of ethnic descent from primordial ancestors. It created the notion of an absolute centre in Jerusalem and the Temple, even for those in the diaspora. All of this was supported by a narrative of origins and a recitation of foundational events in the life of the people of Israel. The several historians that contributed to this narrative often expressed their understanding of the identity of Israel in somewhat different ways, but all became part of a canonical corpus that was the foundation for later Jewish and Christian identities and their subsequent histories. And they initiated an historical literature that emphasized the importance of both specific events and universal principles in the history of human communities.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

Tenth century BC	The period of the 'United Kingdom' and the legendary reigns of the first three kings, Saul, David and Solomon
Late tenth century BC	The 'division' of the kingdom into the Kingdom of Judah under Rehoboam and the Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam I
Early to mid ninth century BC	The reigns of Omri and Ahab, kings of Israel
*c.*727–698 BC	Hezekiah, king of Judah
*c.*639–609 BC	Josiah, king of Judah
*c.*622 BC	The time of the Deuteronomic reform
586–539 BC	Babylonian Exile, the period during which the Deuteronomistic History and the Yahwist's history were written
539–331 BC	Persian Empire, the period during which the Priestly history, the David Saga, the Chronicler's history and Ezra-Nehemiah were written
*c.*515 BC–67 AD	Second Temple period
331–63 BC	Hellenistic period

KEY HISTORICAL SOURCES

The key historical sources are found in the Hebrew Bible.

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Chapter 5

Greek Inscriptions as Historical Writing

Robin Osborne

All inscriptions tell a story.[1] They were created to tell a story. Like all publications, the story they tell involves decisions about exclusion as well as inclusion. Epigraphic scholarship concentrates overwhelmingly on what is included.[2] This stems partly from practical factors. Few Greek inscriptions are preserved complete and easy to read. Much labour goes into deciphering the letters and conjecturing restorations to fill in what is no longer preserved at all.[3] Such efforts encourage overvaluing what is said, as if the detective work of the epigrapher, designed to discover the truth about what was on the stone (bronze, ceramic, and so on), guaranteed that what was on the stone revealed a complex reality, rather than being itself a complex reality. Thinking about inscriptions, not as 'documents' but as historical writing, brings to the foreground the deliberate spinning of a tale that is involved in all decisions to communicate on a hard surface, especially one that is public and enduring.[4]

In this chapter I explore both the ways in which Greeks make history when they write on hard surfaces, and the ways in which modern scholars make history out of what they find on hard surfaces.[5] I begin with a brief survey of the range

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[1] The story inscribed onto this paper has been significantly enhanced by comments and criticism from Andrew Feldherr, Michael Scott, and Caroline Vout, to whom I am most grateful.

[2] The standard bibliographical resource for scholarship on inscriptions is François Bérard *et al.* (eds.), *Guide de l'épigraphiste: Bibliographie choisie des épigraphies antiques et médiévales* (3rd edn, Paris, 2000). In this paper I employ the following abbreviations: *IG* = *Inscriptiones Graecae*; ML = Russell Meiggs and David Lewis (eds.), *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (rev. edn, Oxford, 1988); RO = P. J. Rhodes and Robin Osborne (eds.), *Greek Historical Inscriptions 404–323 B.C.* (Oxford, 2003), *TAM = Tituli Asiae Minoris.*

[3] For introductions to epigraphy see A. G. Woodhead, *The Study of Greek Inscriptions* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 1981).

[4] Although my focus in this piece is on what is written, I should emphasize here that the telling of the story does not necessarily depend upon the inscription having been read. For issues of literacy see Rosalind Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989), ch. 1. A stricter definition of history-writing would limit the corpus of relevant inscriptions to those included in Angelos Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften: Epigraphische Beiträge zur griechischen Historiographie* (Stuttgart, 1988). I see only disadvantages in so doing.

[5] For a full survey of what historians have used inscriptions for, see John Bodel, *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions* (London, 2001).

of epigraphic material surviving from Greek antiquity, pointing out the sorts of stories written into different sorts of inscription, and then, by discussing two particularly rich examples, examine the way in which two major types of public inscription, lists and decrees, created the template in which the past is made history.

THE VARIETY OF GREEK INSCRIPTIONS

Although papyrus was already used as a writing material in the third millennium BC, papyri with Greek texts survive only from the fourth century BC onwards. All known early writing is therefore epigraphic, either literally inscribed or painted.[6] The earliest of this material is eighth century in date, and most scholars believe that the earliest surviving material followed relatively shortly after the invention of the alphabetic script (the Greek records from the late Bronze Age are written in Linear B, a syllabary).[7]

Much early material is only 'public' in a minimal sense and tells simple stories—stories of ownership ('I am the cup of Korax') or of manufacture ('Istrokles made me') or, in particular, a set of inscriptions carved into rocks on the island of Thera, of sexual activity ('Here Krimon fucked Amotion'). Such advertising is, from the earliest date, variously elaborated ('I am the lekythos of Tataie. Whoever steals me shall be struck blind').

The context of this elaboration is sometimes clear. Several of the earliest inscriptions of more than just a few letters belong clearly to the context of the drinking party.[8] A jug from an Athenian burial, dating to perhaps 750 BC, advertises itself as a prize for whichever dancer dances in some particular manner

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[6] Greek inscriptions to 650 BC are conveniently collected in Barry B. Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet* (Cambridge, 1991); archaic inscriptions generally are collected in L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece: A Study of the Origin of the Greek Alphabet and its Development from the Eighth to the Fifth Centuries B.C.* (1961; rev. edn. A.W. Johnston, Oxford, 1990); inscriptions on non-Athenian pottery are in Rudolf Wachter, *Non-Attic Greek Vase Inscriptions* (Oxford, 2001); and a selection of writing on Athenian pottery is in Henry R. Immerwahr, *Attic Script: A Survey* (Oxford, 1980). For a discussion of aspects of early writing on pottery other than those at issue here, see Robin Osborne and Alexandra Pappas, 'Writing on Archaic Greek Pottery', in Zahra Newby and Ruth Leader-Newby (eds.), *Art and Inscriptions in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 2007), 131–55.

[7] In this paper I shall be ignoring the regional differences in what got written when and where within the Greek world, as well as the question of how what Greeks wrote compares with what other contemporaries people wrote. On these issues, see especially Simon Stoddart and James Whitley, 'The Social Context of Literacy in Archaic Greece and Etruria', *Antiquity*, 62 (1988), 761–72; and James Whitley, 'Cretan Laws and Cretan Literacy', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 101 (1997), 635–61.

[8] Scholars debate whether we can properly talk of the 'symposion' at this date; for an argument that we can, see Oswyn Murray, 'Nestor's Cup and the Origins of the Symposion', in *Apoikia: Scritti in Onore di Giorgio Buchner, AION*, n.s. 1 (1994), 47–54.

('most friskily'?). A small and plain cup dating to around 710 BC, found in a boy's burial at Pithekousai (Ischia), boasts: 'I am/this is the cup of Nestor' (the old king of Pylos in the Homeric epics, who at *Iliad* 11.637 lifts a remarkable cup) and wishes that 'the desire of beautiful-crowned Aphrodite will seize whoever drinks this cup'.

The sophistication of the latter example is striking: those at the drinking party are expected to recognize the allusion to epic tradition (probably not yet crystallized into the Homeric poems as we know them), recognize the discrepancy between Nestor's great cup and this ceramic vessel, and enjoy the use of a curse formula to wish a blessing. Designed for particular audiences on particular occasions, these provide fine examples of inscriptions that tell, indeed make, contemporary history. This writing is designed to prompt the situation which it describes. The inscription on the jug encourages frisky (?) dancing; the 'curse' on the cup encourages erotic behaviour. But the inscriptions also situate the reader in an ongoing story, placing his drinking alongside that of Nestor (albeit ironically), or putting his party-dancing into the world of competitions and prizes.[9]

Publicizing ownership, including land ownership on boundary stones, craft activity, and sexual conquest all continue throughout the archaic and classical period, though subject to local fashion, and more popular at some places and times than at others. But two further stories that begin their public life in the seventh century are a more constant feature of subsequent Greek inscribed storytelling: the advertising of the presence of a corpse and the record of a dedication to a god. One early funerary inscription already displays a story which will be implicit or explicit in many later decisions to mark a burial: the story of premature death.[10] On the island of Amorgos an early seventh-century inscription reads: 'Pygmas his father [created] this home for Deidamas'. Even earlier, perhaps, at Corinth was inscribed 'This is the tomb of Deinias, whom the shameless sea destroyed'. In both cases we receive notice, not merely of the presence of a corpse but something of the circumstances of death.

In their simplest form, dedicatory inscriptions record only the identity of the dedicant and the fact of dedication.[11] Such inscriptions might be thought of as addressed either to fellow worshippers or to the deity. More complex formulae may identify the god, indicate what is expected from the god, or say something about the occasion. As stories told to fellow worshippers, these draw attention to the divine owner of the dedication, to what it is that marks out the life history

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[9] Two classic introductions to that world are provided by Leslie Kurke, 'The Economy of *Kudos*', in Carol Dougherty and Kurke (eds.), *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics* (Cambridge, 1993), 131–63; and Catherine Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles: the Transformation of Olympia and Delphi in the Eighth Century B.C.* (Cambridge, 1990).

[10] For which, see further Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, *'Reading' Greek Death to the End of the Classical Period* (Oxford, 1995), 285–97.

[11] Maria Letizia Lazzarini, *Le formule delle dediche votive nella Grecia arcaica* (Rome, 1976).

FIG 5.1 Mantiklos' 'Apollo', *c.* 700–675 BC from Thebes. This figurine of a warrior found at the Ismenion in Thebes carries around its thighs the story of its dedication by Mantiklos to Apollo in return for and expectation of favours.

Source: Photograph © 2009 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

of the dedicant, and to what might reasonably be expected of the dedicant's future. It also puts the dedicant into a communal context, linking him with the ongoing tradition of giving gifts to, and receiving favours from, the gods.

   Two famous examples from the seventh century illustrate well the range of histories that might be conveyed. A large bronze statuette of a naked warrior from the Ismenion in Thebes (see Fig. 5.1) carries on its thighs the inscription 'Mantiklos dedicated me as a tithe to the god with the silver bow who shoots from afar; may you, Phoebus, give a pleasing exchange'. Scholars deduce from the choice of dedicating a bronze warrior that this is a tithe of spoils won in battle and consisting of captured bronze armour. The inscription marks out the expectation of Mantiklos that the god, who himself takes part in war, will show future favour to his warlike activity, having been duly thanked here for his past help. A slightly less than life-size stone statue of a standing woman from the island of Delos, which is the earliest surviving statue of the *kore* type, has the

side of her skirts inscribed with a dedication to Apollo's sister, Artemis: 'Nikandre dedicated me to the goddess pourer of arrows who shoots from afar, daughter of Deinodikes, best of the others, sister of Deinomenes, now wife of Phraxos.' This statue, to the goddess associated both with transition from childhood to womanhood and with assistance in childbirth, seems to have been primarily an advertisement of Nikandre's wedding, and of her movement from the oversight of father and brother to that of husband.

The form as well as the content of these inscriptions is important. And form in two senses. First, these stories are both told in hexameters, shaped as memorable formulae which trip off the reader's tongue. Metrical regularity is a common feature of early inscriptions. These are not merely words, but words to be spoken aloud—words which advertise that they belong to a context of performance. Second, the medium which carries the message is itself physically shaped into a likeness—a likeness in both cases which allows itself to be seen either as a likeness of the dedicant or of the god to whom the dedication is made. The words are materialized on sculptures which themselves emphasize the sympathy between dedicant and the god to whom dedication is made. The statues are both givers and receivers of the inscribed message—the very medium of the 'pleasing exchange' for which Mantiklos explicitly asks.

While individuals inscribe primarily for the moment, or at most for their lifetime and the lifetime of their children, corporate bodies may inscribe for an indefinite future. This is the case for the inscription of community rules, which begin to be written up at around the same time, in a number of places, towards the end of the seventh century. What is conventionally regarded as the earliest of these is a law inscribed on the wall of the temple of Apollo Delphinios at Dreros in Crete, which reads: 'May god be kind. The following pleased the city: whenever someone serves as *kosmos*, the same man is not to serve as *kosmos* again for ten years. If he does serve as *kosmos*, whatever judicial decision he takes he is to owe double and he himself is to lose his rights, and what he does as *kosmos* to be null. The swearers shall be the *kosmos*, and the *damioi*, and the Twenty of the city.'[12] Like all laws, this law, on the face of it, tells the reader that this is a city which has its affairs ordered: here is somewhere where power is shared, and where it is regular bodies of magistrates who have charge of running things. But like all laws, this law also suggests the opposite. If this is a community that needs to lay down that those who have had office cannot simply continue to exercise the powers of that office once their term has expired, then we can reasonably guess that it is a community in which men have actually attempted to exercise such powers, or where men choosing to exercise such powers seems plausible. The decree which advertises power-sharing also advertises that in this community not all who gain power want to share it. But, above all, the story this law

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[12] ML 2.

proclaims is the story that political power has become a central concern within this community, and that the community wants political power under divine oversight.[13]

The Dreros law offers a minimal indication of its origin in the pleasure of the city. Public inscriptions come to divide between those that are more and those that are less explicit about their source of authority. Many laws offer no indication of their sources of authority. This particularly applies to laws found in sanctuaries and concerned with ritual or with behaviour in the sacred space—laws which are often known as 'Sacred Laws'.[14] So a law, from northern Arkadia, inscribed on a bronze plaque, dating to the end of the sixth century reads, and I quote the whole text:

If a woman wears a garment made of animal skin, it is to be consecrated to Demeter Thesmophoros. If she does not consecrate it, may she die a bad death for her conduct unfavourable to the cult, and may the person who at that moment holds the office of *demiourgos* pay a fine of 30 drachmas. If he does not pay, he is to be convicted of impiety. This law is to be in force for ten years. This bronze plaque is to be sacred.[15]

This law is the earliest of a series of laws found in Peloponnesian sanctuaries regulating women's dress and jewellery. It reveals very nicely the effect of giving no indication of the circumstances in which the law came to be passed. The omission of an explicit indication of authority removes any sign of human agency, leaving the implication that this is the will of the god. Yet, at the same time, the time limit to the law implies an historical particularity, inviting the question of when and why this rule was brought in. Although the proximate agent of law enforcement is a specific magistrate, the ultimate agent remains unidentified: who is to convict the negligent *demiourgos* of impiety is never stated, nor who is to administer any punishment consequent upon such a conviction. The story this law wants to tell us is a story of wearing a garment made of animal skin (if indeed that is the correct interpretation of the unparalleled Greek phrase used here) within the sanctuary being unquestionably improper so that reparation must be made to the deity—a reparation which civic officials must enforce if they are not themselves to fall foul of the god. The inscription provides the magistrate with his excuse for intervening—that if he does not, he is himself held responsible. But all episodes invite the reader to fill out their context, and the refusal of the inscription to offer a context leaves the reader to fabricate a context. Such a fabrication is further encouraged by the very specificity of the prohibition. Why only this sort of garment? In the face of the implicit claim that

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[13] Robin Osborne, *Greece in the Making, 1200–479 B.C.* (London, 1996), 185–90.
[14] On the category of 'sacred law', see Robert Parker 'What are Sacred Laws?' in Edward M. Harris and Lene Rubinstein (eds.), *The Law and the Courts in Ancient Greece* (London, 2004), 57–70; and Eran Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents* (Leiden, 2005), 4–9.
[15] F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrés des cités grecques: Supplément* (Paris, 1962), no. 32.

this garment is improper, period, stories of a wave of fashions for particularly showy or provocative leather garments hitting north Arcadia in the Late Archaic period offer themselves. Even the most restrained of readers is alerted to female dress being a particularly sensitive issue in this area at that time.

Sanctuaries were places in which communities published, not only regulations, but also lists. Inventories of dedications made at sanctuaries survive from the fifth century on, detailing in more or less summary form the objects given to the god and housed in the god's temple.[16] This listing creates a pious community of dedicators, and displays that community's piety as it parades the gifts that have been made to the gods. At the same time, listing serves purposes of accountability, indicating that the officials in charge have passed on to their successors what was handed down to them. One peculiar set of dedications listed in a sanctuary were the well-known Athenian Tribute Lists—the lists of the one-sixtieth's of tribute payments made by Athens' allies, during the Athenian Empire of the fifth century, that were offered to Athena.[17] The earliest Tribute Quota lists were inscribed on an enormous stone which must have stood out from all other documents and dedications on the Acropolis. Another set of peculiar dedications, listed separately, were those dedications of libation bowls made, at least for a short period in the second half of the fourth century, by slaves on being granted freedom.[18] In both these cases being on the list was, in antiquity, and has been for historians, evidence of belonging.

Alongside lists of dedications we get lists of financial transactions, marking the way in which sanctuaries managed leased property and lent out money at interest.[19] We also get lists of prizes given at a particular festival, and lists of those victorious at a festival. Although in all cases transparency of operations which had a financial worth, and display of piety to the god were part of the story told, the headlines of these stories were very different—stories about the extent and enforcement of imperial power in the case of the Tribute Quota lists, and stories about personal status and the possibility of upward mobility by slaves in the case

[16] On inventories and their purposes, see T. Linders 'The Purpose of Inventories: A Close Reading of the Delian Inventories of the Independence', in Denis Knoepfler and Jacques Tréheux (eds.), *Comptes et inventaires dans la cité grecque* (Neuchâtel, 1988), 37–47; Sara B. Aleshire, *The Athenian Asklepieion: The People, Their Dedications, and the Inventories* (Amsterdam 1989), 103–110; Beate Dignas ' "Inventories" or "Offering Lists"? Assessing the Wealth of Apollo Didymaeus', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 138 (2002), 235–44; and Carolyn Higbie, *The Lindian Chronicle and the Greek Creation of Their Past* (Oxford, 2003), 258–62.

[17] *IG* I³ 259–90; Benjamin Dean Meritt, H. T. Wade-Gery, and Malcolm Francis McGregor, *The Athenian Tribute Lists*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass, 1939–53); and for brief discussions, see ML 39 and Robin Osborne (ed.), *The Athenian Empire* (4th edn, London, 2000), 86–97.

[18] D. M. Lewis, 'Attic Manumissions', *Hesperia*, 28 (1959), 208–38; and D. M. Lewis, 'Dedications of Phialai at Athens', *Hesperia*, 37 (1968), 368–80.

[19] John K. Davies, 'Temples, Credit, and the Circulation of Money', in Andrew Meadows and Kirsty Shipton (eds.), *Money and its Uses in the Ancient Greek World* (Oxford, 2001), 117–28.

of the 'freedman bowls'.[20] The stories that lists tell hang not so much on the fact that they are lists, but on the memories and connotations attached to the things listed.

Inscribed lists were in fact to be found in various locations in the city, and not merely in its sanctuaries. Magistrates—particularly chief magistrates—might be listed in the Agora (one thinks of the lists of Theoroi inscribed on either side of an entranceway at Thasos so that one walked through history and between the chief magistrates); sales of public contracts (for the leasing of land, of mines) or of confiscated goods might be listed by the officials responsible for the transaction (as with the records of the *poletai* at Athens); and lists of money given to generals for military campaigns, or expended or owed by trierarchs in relation to ships, might be advertised.[21] In the cemetery where war dead were collectively, or symbolically, buried, their names formed another list. The setting of these inscriptions plays little part in the way the data from them has been deployed by modern scholars in the history of the silver mines, of Athenian taxation, of patterns of participation in civic office, of the size and funding of the Athenian navy, and so on, but the context was very much part of the different stories that these different lists told to their contemporary readers.

The way in which different lists were heard to tell different stories is particularly well illustrated by three epigraphic documents from Athens from the first decade of the fourth century BC. Two of these documents are straightforward lists, and lists of a very similar sort.[22] The third document is an individual gravestone. The two lists were both inscribed by the same hand and, although found in different locations and at different times, were probably erected side by side in the area of the Athenian Kerameikos cemetery known as the Demosion Sema.

The first list is the list of those who died in war in the year 394/3—a list which is almost certainly that mentioned by Pausanias at 1.29.11. Only the top right-hand part of the list and the right-hand side of the relief which surmounted it survives, but this is enough to indicate the theatres of war, 'in Corinth and in Boiotia', and to show that casualties were listed by tribe, with dead generals heading the tribal lists. The relief above shows a naked figure with hoplite shield falling under the combined attack of another clothed infantryman from the left and a clothed and mounted cavalryman from the right. Relief and list combine here to tell a story of collective bravery and loss, as infantry and cavalry combined against the enemy and as generals faced up, and succumbed, to danger alongside

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[20] On the question of the degree to which 'accountability' is ever an appropriate explanation for inscribing accounts, see John K. Davies, 'Accounts and Accountability in Classical Athens', in Robin Osborne and Simon Hornblower (eds.), *Ritual, Finance, Politics: Athenian Democratic Accounts Presented to David Lewis* (Oxford, 1994), 201–12.

[21] *Theoroi*: *Poletai* lists: *Agora XIX* (Princeton, 1991); cf. RO 36; and on Naval lists, cf. RO 100.

[22] IG ii² 5221, 5222; Christoph W. Clairmont, *Patrios Nomos: Public Burial in Athens during the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.: The Archaeological, Epigraphic-Literary and Historical Evidence*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1983), no. 68a and b; and 5222 is RO 7A.

those they commanded, though the individual names remain simply part of a statistic of loss.

The second list is fully preserved and was inscribed below a handsome anthemion frieze and surmounted a relief, which is now lost. The list records 'The following cavalrymen died at Corinth . . . at Koroneia', with ten names, plus the name of a cavalry commander after 'Corinth' and one more name after 'Koroneia'. This list too must date to 394/3, and so lists a subset of those named on our first list. The story here, however, is the story of the wealthy cavalry alone, and presumably the relief below showed a specifically cavalry scene. These men's story is made the story, not of the tribal army of the Athenians engaged in collective and collaborative action against the enemy, but the story of individual deaths in particular theatres of war.

The gravestone is one of the most famous of all Athenian gravestones: that of Dexileos of Thorikos (see Fig. 5.2). The stone owes its fame to its size, preservation, the form of its relief, and the beauty and content of its lettering. Below a relief of a young clothed cavalryman on a rearing horse, thrusting his spear into a fallen naked infantryman, the inscription declared that Dexileos died 'at Corinth as one of the five cavalrymen', giving, uniquely for an Athenian gravestone, his dates of birth and of death, showing that he was more or less 20 when he died. Neither our literary accounts of the battles of this year, nor the other epigraphic monuments, allow us to identify 'the five cavalrymen', but the story here is clear. Dexileos is being associated with a particular group, which had become renowned, we must believe, for their bravery or the particular pathos of their death. But there may be another story too—of disassociation from cavalry older than himself. The Athenian cavalry had been tarnished by involvement in the oligarchic coup of the Thirty when Dexileos was just 10, to such an extent that in 400 the Athenians had sent them off to fight abroad in the hope that they might perish.[23]

These three monuments, all of which stood within a very short distance of each other within the Kerameikos cemetery, told at the same time both the same story, of the loss of Athenian life in the battles of the Corinthian war, and three very different stories: of community, class, and personal loss. Together they tell us a story of Athenian democratic solidarity under pressure a decade after the Peloponnesian war, with fractures appearing in Athenian solidarity, not now over the basis of the constitution, but over the degree to which it was appropriate for the community to mark, and celebrate, individual achievement.[24]

Classical and Hellenistic public inscriptions are dominated, however, not by the list but by the decree—documents purporting to give a record of what was

[23] Xenophon *Hellenica* 3.1.4.
[24] I explore this further, with particular regard to the place of the Dexileos relief in the history of grave stelai, in Robin Osborne, 'Democratice Ideology, the Events of War, and the Iconography of Attic Funerary Sculpture', in D. Pritchard (ed.), *War, Culture and Democracy in Classical Athens* (forthcoming).

FIG 5.2 Stele of Dexileos, 393 BC from Kerameikos cemetery, Athens. The gravestone of Dexileos of Thorikos is unusual in the size of its lettering, and unique in providing the story of the life of the deceased by giving a year of birth as well as the year and circumstances of his death in battle.

Source: Photograph © Hirmer Verlag GmbH Munich.

said and decided at meetings of particular public bodies, and above all of public meetings. Public bodies of all sorts recorded some of their decisions in durable form in this way. So, in Athens, we find inscribed decrees of demes, the 139 local descent group communities which together made up the whole *demos*, of phratries—an alternative descent group organization originating earlier in Athenian history—and of *gene*—families responsible for providing specific religious officials, as well as of the Council and the Assembly.

The history which decrees write is in the first place the history of the meeting at which the decision which they record was taken. Although the earliest Athenian decree to survive—that recording the Athenian decision to send a settlement to the island of Salamis at the end of the sixth century—announces itself as a decision of the people with no indication of occasion, or who was responsible for the proposal, by the middle of the fifth century it was regular for the Athenians to record the officials involved (secretary and president of the meeting) and the individual who proposed the action taken. A similar pattern of increasing description of the occasion is found in decrees from other cities.[25] But there are always strict limits to the amount of detail which is recorded about these meetings. We are given the proposal which was approved, along with any amendments made to that proposal, but no attempt is made to summarize the debate or to indicate who might have spoken crucially in favour of the proposal. And ancillary decisions, which must have been made in every case where an inscribed stone results—decisions to inscribe, and about who would pay for the inscription—are only irregularly recorded. When we look more closely it becomes apparent that even the main proposal recorded can often not have been made in the way in which it is recorded. For example, it makes no sense for a proposal to begin with an injunction to publish the decree before the content of the decree has been revealed.[26] As a story, even of that part of the meeting at which the matter in hand was discussed and decided upon, inscribed decrees are highly selective.

But most decrees do not simply tell a story about what went on at a meeting. They tell a story about the past and the future. Regularly, decrees begin with, or at least include, a clause which begins 'Since…', explaining the circumstances which constitute *prima facie* justification for the proposal. And the whole point of taking a decision is to ensure either particular future behaviour (the crowning of a benefactor, the construction of a building), or a general pattern of future behaviour (such as is the point of laws and of treaties, but also more generally of

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[25] Salamis decree: ML14; mid-fifth-century Athenian practice: ML 31; contemporary practice elsewhere: ML 32; cf. P. J. Rhodes with David M. Lewis, *Decrees of the Greek States* (Oxford, 1997).

[26] As does the Phaselis decree, ML 31. For discussion of this case, and of the politics of selectivity in the inscribed record more generally, see Robin Osborne, 'Inscribing Performance', in Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (eds.), *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge, 1999), 341–58 at p. 343.

many honours, which identify the promotion of *philotimia* in general as part of their motivation).

In the following section I examine, through two particular examples, the terms in which decrees, on the one hand, and lists, on the other, created a template for the understanding of history. Both of my examples are drawn from the Hellenistic world, in which the Greek city-states operated as locally autonomous units under the overall control of one or other Hellenistic kingdom. Neither of my examples could be held to be typical, even of its day, but the form and content of these inscriptions reveals particularly clearly the sorts of ways in which inscriptions came to form history.

EXCHANGING HISTORIES:
THE CASE OF XANTHUS AND KYTENION

In 206/5 BC the people of Xanthus in Lycia received three men from Kytenion—a small city in central Greece—wanting money to rebuild their city wall. The embassy was more or less a failure, since the Xanthians gave only the trivial sum of 500 drachmas. But however disappointed the Kytenians were with the result, the Xanthians seem to have been delighted. They wrote up what had happened at great length, and not inconsiderable expense. Much more was at stake for them than simply 500 drachmas. It was the very history of their city. This gap between what the Kytenians brought—a request for money—and what the Xanthians took from them, is inscribed in the very order in which the story came to be written up.

The Xanthians had been faced with ambassadors who began by presenting their credentials. First they had been presented with the decree passed by the Aetolians (lines 73–79). This recorded their decision to allow the Dorians to approach cities that were akin (*sungeneis*) along with kings Ptolemy and Antiochos, who descended from Heracles, and the instruction to the ambassadors to seek contributions to the refortification of Kytenion on the grounds of kinship with the Dorians and the Aetolians. Then they had received the particular letter of the Aetolians to Xanthus (lines 79–88). This had introduced the particular ambassadors, Lamprias, Ainetos, and Phegeus, as Dorians from Kytenion and their reason for coming—the refortification of Kytenion—and noted that to hear them kindly would be to do well by the Aitolian league and their relationship (*oikeiotes*) with the Dorians. Finally they had taken delivery of the letter of 'those from Mother City inhabiting Kytenion'. This gave a still more formal introduction of the ambassadors, in which patronymics are used, and noted that they had come to discuss the content of the letters. The letter then told the story of the burning of houses and destruction of fortification by King Antigonus following the collapse of part of the walls in an earthquake, and asked that, given their kinship (*sungeneia*), the Xanthians might not overlook this disaster to the biggest

city in Mother City, but help and make clear to the rest of Greece their goodwill
to the ethnos and polis, in a way worthy of their ancestors and of Heracles.
It concluded with promises of thanks and a reminder that Ptolemy too would be
pleased.[27]

The story that these letters tell is the story of formal diplomacy. In a world
where power rested with institutions such as the Aitolian League and the
Hellenistic kings, these letters advertise the backing of the Aetolians and make
a case for expecting the support of kings. They formally identify, and effectively
serve as the credentials for, the three ambassadors. And they make clear the
material reason for the embassy, giving at least the nature of the object, the
fallen walls in need of restoration, and, in the last case, a narrative of the circum-
stances in which the walls fell. That narrative does two things: it draws atten-
tion to the role of natural disaster—the earthquake—and it anticipates the
objection that the Kytenians should have been able at least to defend the earth-
quake-damaged walls from further damage by manning them in the face of
Antigonus' attack by explaining that the young men had gone off instead to do
their pious duty of defending the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. There is no
explanation, however, of the background to the war with Antigonus, and
Kytenion is made to play no political role at all; Kytenian agency is conspicuous
by its absence. Although the letters make clear the grounds on which the recip-
ients have been selected—their common ancestry and 'relationship' with the
Dorians of Kytenion—no attempt is made in these letters to spell out that
ancestral link.

When we turn back from this 'appendix' of correspondence to the decree
passed by the Xanthians themselves, the story told is remarkably different. After
reporting the fact that the ambassadors came with the Aitolian decree and letters,
and spoke in conformity with what those documents said, the first substantial
item recorded is a lengthy account of what the ambassadors said to remind the
Xanthians of 'the kinship which exists with them from gods and the heroes'
(lines 14–16). The story related claims that Leto, *archegetis* of Xanthus, gave
birth to Apollo and Artemis there, and Apollo then begat Aesclepius of Koronis,
descendant of Dorus, in Doris. To this it adds a genealogy from Aiolos and
Dorus, and a story that has settlers under Chrysaor, son of Xanthus, come from
Lycia and be protected by Aletes. It then records an appeal for help in terms
much like those used at the end of the Kytenians' letter (compare 32–40 with
100–110), except that when it comes to Ptolemy's kinship it is spelt out that it
comes through the Argead kings from Heracles. The Xanthians then record
their own response to the ambassadors, setting down first their sympathy for the
misfortunes and then the basis for giving the matter their warm attention, which

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[27] On the careful distinction between claims marked as claims to belong to the same descent
group by use of the term *sungeneia*, and vaguer claims to family links marked by the word *oikei-
otes*, see Olivier Curty, *Les Parentés légendaires entre cités grecques* (Geneva, 1995), 189–91.

is identified as lying with 'the kinship from the gods and the heroes and because king Ptolemy is a descendant of Heracles' (lines 47–9). They then explain that, had they not themselves been in straitened circumstances, they would have responded with manifest goodwill, and make a small contribution to show how they do not like to overlook the misfortunes of kin, as well as resolving to have the decree and the communications from the Aetolians and Dorians inscribed and set up in the sanctuary of Leto.

The decision to inscribe the elaborate story of kinship cannot have been required by the decision taken to give 500 dr. Nor does it seem at all likely that the elaboration is merely an insurance mechanism designed to ensure that when other appeals came their way they could brush them aside by citing this case to prove that, even where kinship links were strong, they could not afford great generosity. If we are to understand the Xanthian decision about what to write up, we must surely understand it in terms of the history which the Xanthians wished to write for themselves.

As Jean Bousquet noted, the testimony of the Kytenian ambassadors recorded here is the earliest evidence we have for the claim, found repeated in an imperial inscription and in later poetry, that Leto gave birth to Apollo and Artemis at Xanthus.[28] Were the Kytenians cleverly picking up on something that was already a local tradition—learnt perhaps even during the course of this visit by exercising their curiosity and teasing the story out of their hosts? Or was this their bold invention, prompted by the unusual presence of the cult of Leto as the major Xanthian cult? Whether we think that the Xanthians were simply flattered to have Greeks from the mainland who might be expected to retell the story of the birth of Apollo and Artemis on Delos, adopt their local version, and so wanted to advertise that fact on stone, or whether we think that the ambassadors boldly created a new mythical episode for the purposes of this visit, it is not difficult to understand the attractions of an opportunity to have this version of Olympian theogony displayed in permanent form and on others' authority.[29]

However flattering to the Xanthians, the story of the birth of Apollo and Artemis was in itself of little use to the Kytenians, since it established no special link between Xanthus and Doris. For that, Apollo or Artemis needed to be linked to Doris. This is done by the unparalleled claim which the Kytenians make about the birth of Aesclepius. Apollo and Koronis are recorded elsewhere as Aesclepius' parents, but the place of birth is reckoned to be Trikka or Lakereia in Thessaly, or Epidaurus in the Argolid. There are traces, however, of ancient

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[28] Jean Bousquet, 'La Stèle des Kyténiens au Létôon de Xanthus', *Revue des Études Greques*, 101 (1988), 31.

[29] Compare the Cyrene decree of the late fourth century incorporating the oath supposedly sworn by the Therans before the first settlers were sent to Libya in the late seventh century B.C., ML 5. For discussion of this, see Robin Osborne, *Greece in the Making, 1200–479 B.C.* (London, 1996), 8–17; and opposed by Irad Malkin, ' "Tradition" in Herodotus: The Foundation of Cyrene', in Peter Derow and Robert Parker (eds.), *Herodotus and His World* (Oxford, 2003), 153–70.

identification of the Hestaiotis area of Thessaly as formerly Doris, and the Kytenian ambassadors seem to take advantage of this, never going further than to claim that Aesclepius was born in Doris.[30] While it is true that the claim to be the birthplace of Aesclepius might serve the Kytenians well if they went looking for contributions at such a place as Kos, this detail is better understood in the context of providing a link between Doris and Apollo, than as a claim about Aesclepius. Those who were as seriously concerned with Aesclepius as were the Coans might not see anything in it for them in buying into this new branding of the god's birthplace.[31] For the Xanthians, who had only a minor link to Aesclepius, accepting the rebranding of his birthplace was a small price to pay for acquiring Apollo and Artemis as their own scions.[32]

The Kytenians did not base their claims to ancestral links with Xanthus solely on stories about the gods. They seem to have offered two sets of stories about heroes as well. The first of these the Xanthians pass over with a brief mention. Whatever the Kytenians said about the 'genealogy between Aiolos and Dorus' (lines 23–4) did not sufficiently attract the Xanthians to become related in any further detail in the decree. But the Kytenians' second strand, the story of 'the settlers sent out from our land by Chrysaor, the son of Glaukos, the son of Hippolochos' (line 25) receives full coverage. These settlers, the story goes, received protection from the Heraclid Aletes, who came to their aid from Doris when they were fighting a war, and went on to marry the daughter of Chrysaor's son Aor. Aletes is otherwise known as the son of Hippotas, the man who removed the Sisyphids from Corinth and refounded it, and the Corinthians came to be referred to as 'Aleteidai' because of their link with Aletes. As Bousquet notes, as far as we know it is only the needs of this particular story that make Aletes come from *Doris* to the aid of the Lycian settlers.[33]

The attraction of the Xanthians to this particular mythological claim is remarkable. Chrysaor, as scholars have noted, although descended from Glaukos, has his primary links not with Xanthus and the Lycians, but with the Carians to the north-west, who had a 'Chrysaorian League'.[34] The link between Asia Minor and central Greece, which this mythical tale creates, is thus tangential for both Xanthians and Kytenians. So why is it repeated?[35] The attraction, I suggest, is rather the narrative of reverse 'colonization', of settlers being dispatched from Lycia to mainland Greece. Although the final destination and fate of the settlers sent out by Chrysaor is not made clear in this story, the very presentation of this,

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[30] Bousquet, 'La Stèle des Kyténiens au Létôon de Xanthus', 32–3.
[31] For the suggestion about Kos see ibid., 33–4.
[32] For an altar of Aesclepius at Xanthus see *TAM* II.268.
[33] Bousquet, 'La Stèle des Kyténiens au Létôon de Xanthus', 35.
[34] Ibid., 36–7, suspecting that the story was created to obtain money from the Carians.
[35] Longstanding Xanthian enthusiasm for stressing their links with the *Iliad*, manifest in the dedications of Arbinas in the early fourth century (RO 13), is hardly sufficient to explain what is going on here, where the name of Glaukos is the only *Iliadic* feature to conjure with.

in Bousquet's terms, as a story where the Lycians are the 'cowboys' and the inhabitants of central Greece the 'Indians', gives the Xanthians a position of seniority offered by none of the usual stories, in which the Lycians descend from Bellerophon and from the line of the Corinthian Sisyphus.[36] While not going as far as to make Xanthus mother city of Kytenion itself, this story holds out the expectation that Xanthus can indeed claim the dues of filial piety from some mainland Greek community.

In writing up the Kytenian embassy in this way, the Xanthians write up a whole new history for themselves. They acquire a prehistory which goes back to the birth of the Olympian gods, an heroic past in which they give as well as receive settlers, and a place on the world map. They are revealed as being tied in to the network of the gods, an important place in Olympian geography, and tied in to the network of heroes, with their own heroes having a hotline to the line of Heracles, and so a hotline to the line from which the kings of the late third century also claim descent. If the reciprocity which the language of kinship and relatedness entails is part of what opens up this history for them, the terms in which the heroic prehistory is written urges in particular a political force to Xanthus' story. The history of Xanthus and the gods is a genetic history of birth events (*gennesai*, line 18; *genesthai*, line 20). But the history of Xanthus and the heroes is a political history: it involves the sending of a 'home from home' (*apoikia*, 25), the exercise of planning (*pronoia*, 26), aid being given in warfare (27–8), and the resolution of a dangerous situation (28–9), leading to a settled alliance. It is notable that the verb used for Aletes' union with the daughter of Aor, *synoikein*, is used again just two lines later to describe the resulting goodwill which had 'lived with them' from ancient times.[37] The adventure story told here provides not simply a reason for being sympathetic towards the Kytenians, but a model of how communities should relate politically in an age when, as the narrative of the Kytenian decree, which the Xanthians choose not to repeat, itself shows, there is still danger to settlements from raiders.

THE HISTORY OF A LIST: THE LINDIAN CHRONICLE

The exercise of historical imagination which the Xanthian decree about Kytenion leads us to reconstruct is even more dramatically manifested in an extraordinary list, or rather set of lists, from the island of Rhodes, which has become known as the Lindian Chronicle.[38] In 99 BC the Lindians decided to make a list of the most

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[36] 'La Stèle des Kyténiens au Létôon de Xanthus', 34–5.

[37] *Synoikein* is both the word for sexual intercourse and for two communities agreeing to join to form a single political unit.

[38] C. Blinkenberg, *Lindos: Fouilles de l'acropole 1902–1914*, 2 vols. (Berlin and Copenhagen, 1941), no. 2 (i. 48–99); and Higbie, *The Lindian Chronicle and the Greek Creation of their Past.* I employ

beautiful dedications that had been made to Athena Lindia at her 'most ancient and most venerable' shrine (line A2).[39] As we have seen, inventories of dedications were not unusual; but this one was different, for 'most of the offerings together with their inscriptions have been destroyed on account of time' (line A4). The Lindians therefore set two select men the task of researching the past dedications, on the basis of 'letters and public records' (line A7). Two lists follow, inscribed in three columns beneath the decree. The first is a list of dedications (in columns B and C) and the second of 'epiphanies' of the goddess (column D).

The first entry in the list of dedications reads (B2–8):

Lindos, a phiale. Which no one was able to discover what it is made from, on which had been inscribed: 'Lindos to Athena Polias and Zeus Polieus', as Gorgon reports in his investigations in the eleventh book of his work *About Rhodes*, Gorgosthenes the priest of Athena in his letter to the *boule*, Hieroboulos himself also a priest in his letter to the *mastroi.*

The eponymous founder of the city appropriately heads the list of dedicants, with that most standard of dedications, the libation bowl (phiale). A statue of Lindos son of Kerkaphos seems to have been put up on the Lindian acropolis as a dedication to Zeus Polieus by a priest of Athena in the late fourth century, with the name of Lindos inscribed 'en caractères extraordinairement grands', although evidence for the cult of 'Lindos and the other heroes' belongs to after the Lindian chronicle.[40] Blinkenberg himself commented that the hero cult was a product of 'the same spirit that led to the editing of the Chronicle (or perhaps an effect of the Chronicle itself?)'.[41] The history written in this first Chronicle dedication both reflects the existing presence of the eponymous hero as a recognized element in Lindian self-identification, and encourages the Lindians to strengthen that identification by building in ritualized memorialization in the form of hero cult.

The second dedication on the list is by the Telchines. The third reads: 'Kadmos, a bronze lebes. Inscribed with Phoenician letters, as Polyzalos relates in the fourth book of his *Histories.*' This dedication also features in Diodorus' account of the early history of Rhodes in Book 5 chapters 55–63 of his *Universal History* (*c*.30 BC). That account starts with the Telchines, drawing attention to the existence of Apollo Telchinios at Lindos, and proceeds with the flood and the subsequent drying up of the island by Helios, the Sun, whose action causes the spontaneous creation of the Heliadai who, instructed by Helios, initiate the cult of Athena. The Heliadai were very learned, but all trace of their learning

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Higbie's translations, with some modifications. As many have commented, the title 'Chronicle' is strictly inappropriate (Ibid., 159; and Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften*, 53), though it does serve to emphasize that this is a piece of history-writing.

[39] Dating is given by the priest of Athena; Blinkenberg, *Lindos*, no. 1 is an inscribed priest list.
[40] Ibid., no. 57A (for the statue) and no. 282.31 (for the cult).
[41] Ibid., ii. 595 (my translation).

and of writing perished in another flood, causing later men to think writing was brought to Greece by Kadmos. Diodorus then tells the story of visits to Lindos by Danaus and his daughters, three of whom died there, and by Kadmos, who made the dedication of a 'bronze lebes worth mentioning, made in the ancient form (*rhythmos*) and inscribed in Phoenician letters'.[42]

Diodorus' mention of the dedication is so completely embedded in his longer account of Rhodian history that it is unlikely to derive from the Chronicle itself. Whether he derived it from Polyzalos is not clear. Earlier in his account of Rhodes, Diodorus mentions Zenon, whom the Chronicle credits elsewhere (90–91, 117), and although the Chronicle offers in this case only one source, the prominence of Kadmos at Ialysos, as well as at Lindos, makes it very likely that this dedication figured more widely in the literary record.

Whether or not the Chronicle and Diodorus derive from the same source, the Chronicle is, unusually, an inscription based on written sources, and this entry gives us an opportunity to see the effect of writing history as list. Gone from the Chronicle is any assessment of the dedication—selection for this list guarantees that these are objects 'worth mentioning'. More importantly, the Chronicle is only interested in putting these objects into one history: the history of Lindos constructed as a parade of notable figures. Diodorus' situation of the dedication both in his history of writing and in his history of art ('in the ancient *rhythmos*') are both irrelevant to the history the Chronicle constructs. The consequence, however, of offering no explicit indication of the other stories to which the dedication, or the dedicating episode, belongs is to make this a highly allusive list. The list expects its readers to recognize these names, and to be able to divine for themselves the appropriate occasions on which the dedications may have been made.

The effect of the list relies upon the reader being able to deduce from it just how central Lindos has been in every important episode happening in Greek history, from the earliest mythical times before the flood onwards. The most guidance that the Chronicle gives comes in the wording of the dedications. Kadmos' dedication is one of a small number of examples for which the content of the dedicatory inscription is not quoted (in this case because it was perhaps in Phoenician), but many other dedications give only the name of the dedicator, and no indication of occasion. However, on a number of occasions, either where the figure in question was associated with so many exploits the occasion might be hard to deduce, or where the association with Lindos is unexpected, more is said.

So, after the record of a dedication by Minos, we are told that Heracles dedicated two shields, one faced with leather and the other with bronze, and that their inscriptions identified them as 'from the Meropes, the shield of Eurypylus' and 'the shield of Laomedon, from the Teucrians'. This inscription places Heracles' visit to Lindos in association with Heracles' sack of Troy and subsequent adventures on Kos, thus not merely giving the Lindians the kudos of association

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[42] Diodorus 5.58.3.

with *the* hero of popular culture, but distinguishing the Lindians as favoured by
the hero when the king of neighbouring Kos—Eurypylus son of Poseidon—had
challenged him to a battle. So too, the first of the six dedications listed that is
connected with the Trojan War is declared to have an inscription reading 'the
men who campaigned with Tlepolemos against Ilion to Athena Lindia, spoils
from Troy'.

One exceptional entry highlights the reticence of other entries, and shows
very clearly the editorial hand. The first of the post-Trojan War dedications
listed is a set of three plaques—one from each of the Lindian 'tribes':

Each of the *phylai*, a most ancient plaque. On which was painted a *phylarkhos* and nine
dromeis, all holding archaic stances; on the image of each of them had been inscribed the
name, and on the first of the plaques had been inscribed: 'The *phyle* of the Haliadai,
having conquered, dedicated this to Athena Lindia'. On the second, 'this is the sign of
victory; the *phyle* of the Autochthones, having prevailed, adorned the goddess'. On the
third, 'the *phyle* of the Telchines, conquering, dedicated this to Athena; Lykopadas the
son of Lykeus was leader of the torchlight procession' (B 88–98).

The description of the appearance of the figures on the plaques contradicts, on
the face of it, my suggestion above that the accounts are limited to what is rele-
vant to the history of Lindos, and eliminate material which would contribute to
other histories. But there the appearance of these figures is precisely relevant to
Lindian history. The placing of these dedications in the almost entirely chrono-
logical sequence of the list constitutes a bid to establish the antiquity of the
Lindian structure of tribes and tribal magistrates—which have been active, have
been the basis for Lindian military activity, and, the implication is, have been
actively involved in religious rituals, since soon after the Trojan War.[43]

The sense of the antiquity of the tribes, established by their position in the
list, is reinforced by one unusual feature of the entry that follows: it records a
reused dedication, quoting both the inscriptions. The first of these connects the
dedication with Adrastos and the aftermath of the death of Aigialeus—events
which occurred before the Trojan War in the context of successive attempts to
put Polynices on the Theban throne.[44] The second inscription—the one that is
relevant to the presence of the item in the list—cannot be placed chronologically
by us, and it is highly unlikely that the name Aretakritos/Aretos was a name to
be conjured with by first-century BC Lindians. For the reader, therefore, the only
chronological resonance of this entry is provided by Adrastos.

The entry on the dedication by Aretakritos/Aretos and sons is followed by an
entry recording a dedication of spoils in connection with settling Cyrene with
Battus. Commentators have attempted to fit this Lindian dedication into

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[43] The only certain breach of chronological sequence is the listing of the third-century dedica-
tion in connection with Ptolemy Philadelpheus before the dedication of Alexander the Great
(C 97–102).

[44] Pausanias 1.44.4.

Herodotus' story of the settlement by Greeks at Cyrene by associating it with the second wave of settlers under Battus II in approximately 570, which is followed by a constitutional rearrangement which allows for a tribe of 'Islanders'.[45] But the quotation of the inscription as 'those of the Lindians who with the children of Pankis founded Cyrene with Battus' hardly supports this. The supplementary settlers under Battus II can hardly have been said to have 'founded the city'. There cannot be much doubt that the Lindians thought they were here recording their part in the original foundation of Cyrene.

After the dedication of Pankis, five entries are missing at the bottom of column B. Column C starts with a dedication made by the Phaselitai when they were engaged in founding a settlement, and proceeds with a series of six dedications, interrupted by a dedication of Amasis, that link Lindos to Greek settlements in south Italy and Sicily.[46] It seems probable that the Pankis dedication initiated a whole block of entries tying Lindos in with stories of Greek settlement abroad. These were followed by a Persian entry—one of two which effectively frame the period of Persian dominance, the first entry being linked to Darius and the second to Artaxerxes (in neither case is the dedicatory inscription quoted). Lindos here acquires a place at the centre of a world stretching far to east and west.

The dedication in connection with Artaxerxes is the second of four dedications made by 'the *damos*' or 'The Lindians'. The first of these is of spoils from Crete, the second is of a gift from Artaxerxes, the third a Victory as thank offering, and the fourth is a shield dedicated in accordance with an oracle promising that the offering of a votive shield would bring an end to the war with Ptolemy Philadelphos. This repeated display of public piety serves also to stress the independence of the Lindians, who not only have control of their own affairs and their own wars, but are able to bring those wars to an end favourable to themselves. These entries make a striking contrast and, given the interruption of chronological order (n. 43 above), surely a deliberate contrast, with the last five entries, all of which start with the word 'King': 'King Alexander…', 'King Ptolemy…', 'King Pyrrhus…', 'King Hieron…', 'King Philip'. The sequence serves to emphasize the importance of the Athena Lindia sanctuary within the Hellenistic world. As no reader who has got this far could possibly doubt, the Lindia sanctuary is the ultimate place to make a dedication. Where else could Alexander have contemplated advertising his victory over Darius, or Pyrrhus and Hieron their own martial valour, or Philip V his activities in Asia Minor; and where else could Ptolemy have desired to make so spectacular a sacrifice? Lindos remains very much on the Hellenistic map, in a world where the Lindians

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[45] Blinkenberg, i.167; and Higbie, *The Lindian Chronicle and the Greek Creation of their Past*, 101.
[46] Ascription of the record of the corslet dedicated by Amasis to 'Herodotos the Thurian' gives a south Italian connection even for Amasis.

themselves can influence their own position in the world precisely because they have such cultural capital to deploy.

The final section of the inscription, column D, is a list of a different sort, constituted by just three epiphanies, again arranged, as far as we can see, in chronological order. The first epiphany dates to 490 and the Persian expedition defeated at Marathon.[47] By contrast to the list of dedications, this epiphany is represented in a full narrative, with successive sentences introduced by a variety of temporal clauses (the first two by genitive absolutes, the third with 'During this time…', and so on). This story involves the epiphany of Athena to one of the magistrates, her intervention with her father Zeus to procure rain, the dedication by the Persian commander Datis of his personal equipment in wonder at the intervention, and the signing of a treaty of friendship.

The second epiphany is strongly contrasting. Once more a story is told—this time in one long and convoluted sentence. In it, Athena appears to stop the Lindians worrying about cleansing the temple after a suicide behind her statue, commanding them to remove the roof above the statue for three days so that Zeus could himself purify it. The text is incomplete, but no doubt Zeus does as Athena says. This is a story with virtually no extra-Lindian political aspect (unless consulting Delphi constitutes such), but with a strong domestic agenda.

The third epiphany turns explicitly to Lindian relations with the outside world. Once more Lindos is besieged—this time by Demetrius Poliorcetes (in *c.*304 BC). A former priest is repeatedly visited by Athena who insists that the magistrates be instructed to write to Ptolemy. Once more the end of the story is missing, but there can be no doubt that the act of contacting Ptolemy proved well advised.

The history which these three epiphanies create is carefully crafted. While the list of dedications makes manifest dedications that have been lost, and so demonstrates that the Lindians have had a place at the centre of Greek communications with the gods from the earliest time of myth, the list of epiphanies makes manifest the goddess herself. The importance of Athena's manifest power is that it is manifest. That figures in the past have, in the words of the opening decree, 'adorned [the sanctuary] with many beautiful offerings from the earliest times on account of the visible presence of the goddess' (A 3), is backed up with evidence that Athena is still a goddess worth honouring. The three stories offer what is perhaps the minimal demonstration of that fact. They show the goddess spontaneously coming to the aid of the city in the hour of the greatest threat that the Greeks as a whole faced: the invasion by the Persians. They show the goddess concerned for the well-being of the community in its day-to-day relationship to the gods. And they show that, in the contemporary world of Hellenistic kings, the goddess will

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[47] For the suggestion that other dates in the 490s are possible, see Higbie, *The Lindian Chronicle and the Greek Creation of their Past*, 141. In my view the reference to Darius 'having sent out great forces for the enslavement of Greece' is compatible only with the Marathon expedition.

support the foreign policy which the Rhodian magistrates adopt. Whatever turns Lindian history takes, and whether the crisis comes from outside or from within the community, Athena will offer support—not just seeing the Lindians through to a happy conclusion, but enabling them to carry through normal life with the minimum of disruption. Between them, the dedications and the epiphanies have something to say, both to idle tourists and to the Roman political masters.

The Lindian chronicle is a remarkable piece of historical writing. In place of a connected narrative it offers a series of exemplary moments that give the Lindians grounds for believing themselves always to have been at the centre of Greek affairs, and which sandwich Lindian matters (such as the organization into three tribes) with matters that bulk large in the concerns of the wider Greek world (as with the Trojan War, and as with episodes of settlement of Greeks in Sicily, southern Italy, and north Africa). This is history that derives its power from being embedded in wider traditions, that depends indeed upon other 'histories', not just in the narrow sense of the works from which the descriptions of the lost votives or of the epiphanies are culled, but in the broad sense of the stories which Greeks told about their mythical and historical past. The spare list of votives is in many ways an anti-history, in particular because, although it sometimes indicates the occasion for a dedication, it offers no account of the reasons for dedication (why did the Lindian tribes dedicate spoils of war to Athena Lindia and not to some other god?). These dedications are spoils from the past, appropriating both epic and history, not to commemorate past deeds by others, but to show off Lindos' present pre-eminence. The motivating force is indicated in the opening decree and then forcefully expressed by the three epiphanies: who would not go out of their way to show thanks in this place to a goddess who manifestly offers aid?

INSCRIPTIONS AS HISTORICAL WRITING

The two inscriptions which I have examined at length are Hellenistic Greek decrees. They mark themselves out from earlier inscriptions by their length and by their self-conscious construction and incorporation of a past. Both inscriptions can be more or less closely paralleled: the Xanthus inscription by many examples, the Lindian chronicle in its individual features, if not in its entirety.[48] But the point of discussing them here is not that particular parallels can be drawn, but that they offer particularly clear and explicit examples of the way history is written in *all* inscriptions.

What the Xanthian decree and Lindian list do is take the information available to the author or authority in question, and shape that information into their

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[48] Parallels for the Lindian chronicle are discussed ibid., 258–88.

own story. In the case of the Xanthian decree, the information was almost certainly newly available, offered, with more or less Xanthian encouragement, by the three Kytenian ambassadors as they sought, with scant success, to persuade the Xanthians that their ancestral relationship was such as to require generosity in Kytenion's time of need. In the case of Lindos, the information had been more or less long available in scholarly accounts which, to judge by, for example, Diodorus' history of early Rhodes, embedded antiquarian data about dedications to Athena Lindia into their continuous accounts of Rhodes' mythical and historical past. In the Xanthian decree we explicitly see the editorial hand, as some data from the decree of the Aetolians and the letters sent to Xanthus is taken up, other data ignored, and as some of what the ambassadors said is noted in detail, and some passed over with a brief mention. The editorial hand of the Lindian list can be deduced from the multiple-source citations, for the sources from which the citations are culled cannot have restricted themselves to the bare information offered by the Lindians on the stone, but is even more clearly shown when, as is the case with Kadmos' dedication, a surviving literary text discusses the same dedication.

All history-writing selects. What makes inscriptions worth looking at as history-writing is that even the longest are short texts, designed, rather like letters, more or less single-mindedly for a designated purpose (albeit a purpose that is not always spelt out, or that is ancillary to the purpose that is spelt out), and delivered, like letters, on a specific occasion, often consequent on, or accompanied by, certain rituals. While the writers of literary histories have, and are expected to have, many histories to tell, epigraphic texts are in almost all cases single-dimensional. If histories have often been suspected of being ragbags into which the author has stuffed disparate material because he thought it would fit into some story that he was, or might be, interested in at some point, inscriptions tell on a much more strictly 'need-to-know' basis. Therein lies both their value and their danger for the historian today.

The beauty of epigraphic texts being inscribed on a need-to-know basis, and put up where people needed to know, is that it is usually possible to tell, from context and form as well as content, what the reader is thought to need to know. It is for this reason that the existence of an inscription is itself such a significant piece of data for the historian. Inscriptions tell us what individuals and cities in particular circumstances and at particular points in time thought readers needed to know, and those who could not read needed to be made to ask about.

The danger of epigraphic texts being constructed on a need-to-know basis is that epigraphic silences are both extraordinarily powerful—they potentially reveal what an author or authority felt it necessary that the reader did not know—and extraordinarily treacherous—we can neither assume that what is not mentioned has been deliberately suppressed, nor that what is not mentioned was not known. It is not least for this reason that we must always ask why this statement was made on a monument like this, and in this place.

Most scholars, most of the time, who employ epigraphic texts to help answer their own questions about Greek antiquity are seeking to answer questions different from the questions that the texts themselves single-mindedly set out to answer. We want to deduce information about institutional arrangements, or about the economy, or about naming patterns and family structure, or about chronological sequence. Making such deductions almost always involves making assumptions about how typical a text is, and usually it involves assuming that texts have a lot of noise in them—a lot of information which is revealed on the way. But the more single-minded the author has been, the less confidence we can have that either the data given in, or the form taken by, the inscription was incidental. Often, of course, we are rather poorly equipped to determine whether the data was nicely judged for the purpose, or carved laboriously but in vain, for almost by definition we turn to inscriptions to answer our questions because we have no alternative source. But our own history-writing will be both impoverished and fatally flawed if we fail to take account of the fact that all inscriptions are pieces of historical writing.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

(All dates BC)

*c.*750	Earliest writing (on pottery)
*c.*700	Earliest inscriptions on stone
*c.*650	Earliest inscriptions by political bodies, inc. Dreros law
508/7	Cleisthenes' constitutional reforms at Athens
480/79	Persian invasion repulsed by Greeks
478	Delian League established (becomes Athenian Empire)
394/3	Grave stele of Dexileos
323	Death of Alexander the Great
206/5	Kytinians request help from Xanthus
196	Roman general Flamininus proclaims the 'Freedom of the Greeks'
99	Lindian Chronicle

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Chapter 6

Early Greek Poetry as/and History

Deborah Boedeker

Herodotus and Thucydides have long been hailed as the founders of historiography in the Western tradition. The originality and influence of both are remarkable by any standard, yet Herodotus' expansive *Histories* (probably completed in the late 420s BC), and Thucydides' more focused *History of the Peloponnesian War* (unfinished, perhaps due to Thucydides' death, *c.*400) were by no means the first Greek texts to focus on 'historical' matters. A number of early fifth-century prose writers deal with past events and peoples, including Hecataeus (*Circuit of the World* and *Genealogies*), Pherecrates (a genealogical *Histories* of Athenian families), and—if indeed he predates Herodotus—Charon of Lampsacus (*Persica* and other local histories/ethnographies).[1] Such works, unfortunately, survive for the most part only in brief quotations and references by later writers. Better preserved for us, and also more widely known in the fifth century, if literary citations are any measure, are poetic texts that deal with the remembered or imagined past.

Many poetic modes can be included in this group—among them sustained narrative, first-person recollections, allusions, and dramatizations. Some works of 'poetic history' took shape generations, even centuries, before Herodotus and Thucydides, while others were composed during their lifetimes and later. Originating all over the Greek world, they focused on the recent past (from the composer's perspective) as well as traditions set in an earlier age. Contemporaries of Herodotus and Thucydides would have encountered such texts in live performances more readily than in written form—at festivals that honoured the gods and reaffirmed the social community, at special musical or dramatic

competitions,[2] and at less formal gatherings, particularly the symposia frequented by elite males. Other examples of 'historical' poetry, in the form of brief verse epitaphs and epigrams commemorating an individual's or community's great deeds, were inscribed on stone.[3] In its many manifestations, poetic history was a conspicuous aspect of fifth-century culture, and an important source of what most Hellenes 'knew' about their past.

This chapter looks at early Greek historical poetry and its complex relationships with the prose histories of Herodotus and Thucydides. I begin with an overview (by no means a comprehensive study) of archaic and early classical Greek poetic texts as historical literature in their own right, focusing on the wide range of genres (or performance types) with their many ways of using the past. Then I will review how the two historians evaluate poetic accounts of the past (usually to the detriment of the poets!), and finally consider some of the manifold ways in which the historical poetry that preceded them informs and interacts with the texts of Herodotus and Thucydides.

EARLY GREEK POETRY AND COMMEMORATION OF THE PAST

In archaic and early classical Greece (eighth to mid fifth centuries BC), accounts of past human events, remembered or imagined—what grandfather did in the war, how we defended our territory against an invader, whence and why our forebears migrated to this place—were doubtless passed along in ordinary speech. In addition, specialist composers and performers, using the marked language and rhythms of their craft, transmitted stories of human deeds (as well as many other topics, such as songs praising gods and telling of *their* deeds, military exhortations, and poems offering ethical advice or practical knowledge). Such poetic accounts, performed at communal occasions great and small, were important in establishing or preserving traditions about the past, and played a notable role in forming collective identities.[4]

Some of these narratives succeeded in becoming known more widely than within a single community, thanks no doubt to travelling singers and performances at

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[2] On proliferating musical performances in Athens, which the Odeion was built to serve in the 440s, see Robert Wallace, 'Damon of Oa: A Music Theorist Ostracized?' in Penelope Murray and Peter Wilson (eds.), *Music and the Muses: The Culture of Mousike in the Classical Athenian City* (Oxford, 2004) 249–67, at pp. 264–5; and Peter Wilson, 'Athenian Strings', ibid., 269–306, at p. 285.

[3] See Andrew Ford, *The Origins of Criticism: Literary Culture and Poetic Theory in Classical Greece* (Princeton, 2002) 138, contrasting epigram and song; on Greek inscriptions and history, see Robin Osborne in this volume.

[4] For recent discussions, see Barbara Graziosi and Johannes Haubold, *Homer: The Resonance of Epic* (London, 2005), esp. 42–3; John Marincola, 'Herodotus and the Poetry of the Past', in Dewald and Marincola, *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, 13–28; and Corcella, 'The New Genre and Its Boundaries'.

intercity festivals. A few versions of songs about the past attained panhellenic renown.[5] Most familiar and influential among these are the Homeric epics *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which developed in a long oral tradition, to take their familiar shape perhaps around 700 BC. For many centuries thereafter they provided far-flung Hellenes with a sense of common cultural heritage; it can fairly be said that the Trojan War, as preserved in Homeric epic, provides the 'generative matrix' of all Greek history.[6]

EPIC AS HISTORY

The contents of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are certainly more mythical than historical in the modern sense. From the perspective of their performers and audiences, however, the epics are set in the past, conspicuously marked as *different* from the present. Even while most of the actions described play out in real-world Aegean geography, the epics self-consciously present an 'heroic' society of long ago.[7] The heroes' weapons are made of bronze, not iron; warriors are mightier than contemporary men (though certainly not unintelligible to them); and the most prominent of them often fight from chariots. The institutions of the early Greek *polis*—familiar when the epics took the form we recognize—may be discerned in the narrative background, but the foreground is marked by ancient-style hereditary kings and their palaces—partly 'remembered' in traditions passed down from the late Bronze Age (or constructed from its visible traces), and partly imagined.[8]

This epic past, moreover, is multi-layered. Homeric characters tell of things that happened before their own time, and know that conditions will change in the future; thus Trojan Hektor imagines a time when his city will no longer exist (*Il.* 6.447–449). The primary narrator too—who attributes his knowledge of the past to the omniscient, omnipresent Muse(s), daughter(s) of Zeus—occasionally discloses what will happen beyond the end of the present narrative. He may do this in his own voice, as when he reveals that Apollo and Poseidon destroyed the Achaeans' fortification wall after the fall of Troy (*Il.* 12.12–35), or the future may

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[5] See Gregory Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore, 1990), 17–81, for a fundamental discussion of the special speech of 'song' and the process of Panhellenization.

[6] François Hartog, 'The Invention of History: The Pre-History of a Concept from Homer to Herodotus', *History and Theory*, 39 (2000), 139–52, at pp. 388–9.

[7] Hermann Strasburger, *Homer und die Geschichtsschreibung* (Heidelberg, 1972); and Jonas Grethlein, *Das Geschichtsbild der Ilias: Eine Untersuchung aus phänomenologischer und narratologischer Perspektive* (Göttingen, 2006) are landmarks in the prolific bibliography on the sense of 'history' in the Homeric epics.

[8] See Kurt Raaflaub, 'A Historian's Headache: How to Read "Homeric Society"?' in Nick Fisher and Hans van Wees (eds.), *Archaic Greece: New Evidence and New Approaches* (London and Swansea, 1998), 169–93.

be conveyed through a prophet like Teiresias in the underworld, who foresees Odysseus' journeys that will take place after his return home at the conclusion of the *Odyssey* (11.119–134).

A particular historical sensibility is reflected in the perception shared by the epic narrator and his characters that what occurs is not only sequentially related to what has gone before, but also is *contingent* upon a number of factors.[9] In part, the poet develops a connected, but not wholly predictable, relationship between past and present in the way he dramatizes his characters' motives, plans, and reactions, especially by having them speak in their own voices. The audience hears for itself how human deliberations and decisions lead to actions: Achilles, for example, decides in a speech that he will rejoin the battle and kill Hektor in order to avenge his dear friend Patroclus (*Il.* 18.88–116). At other times, changes of fortune come about through accident or a god's unforeseen (if not unmotivated) intervention, as when Athena fatally tricks Hektor into facing Achilles by appearing to him as a supportive brother ready to help him face the foe (*Il.* 22.225–247). The contingency of events displayed in the Homeric presentation of the past is one of many characteristics that will be taken up in the prose historiography of Herodotus and Thucydides.

Much less concerned with *human* history, but nonetheless 'historical' in its scheme of development through time, is the Hesiodic *Theogony.* This hymnic epic (usually dated somewhat later than the Homeric poems) concentrates on the birth of gods, generation by generation, and the eventual organization under Zeus of the Earth with all its interconnecting physical, divine, and moral components. For much of the *Theogony*, the dramatic attention to human deliberation and the emphasis on chance that characterizes Homeric 'historicity' is replaced by a proliferation of divine births that gradually populate the once-empty world. Nonetheless, plans and motives of Hesiodic characters sometimes come to the fore (for example, Gaia's plot to avenge herself, with the help of her son Cronos, for the outrageous constrainment perpetrated by her consort Ouranos [*Theog.* 159–72]). So does the suspenseful, mimetic description of past action, as with the battle between Zeus and Typhoeus (*Theog.* 836–68). In another trope shared with Homeric epic,[10] catalogues (for example, all the Greek contingents in the Trojan War [*Il.* 2.493–760]; the daughters of Okeanos and Tethys [*Theog.* 346–70]) add a sense of precision and authorial mastery to the poetic account; this too will find its way into prose historiography. The *Theogony* rarely mentions events that occur beyond the boundaries of the main narrative, but once the regime of Zeus is established the text goes on to list the offspring of goddesses' unions with mortal men (*Theog.* 965–1018).[11] This final section extends the

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[9] As recently argued from a phenomenological perspective in Grethlein, *Das Geschichtsbild der Ilias.*

[10] See, for example, Graziosi and Haubold, *Homer*, 47–8.

[11] On the *Theogony*'s ending see Martin L. West (ed.), *Hesiod: Theogony* (Oxford, 1966), 437.

poem's range down to the age of heroes—some of them eponymous ancestors of peoples known to the Panhellenic audience.[12] The world of the audience is thereby linked genealogically (if vaguely) with the formative cosmic time that occupies most of the epic.

In the didactic epic *Works and Days*, the narrator Hesiod admonishes his unrighteous brother for trying to cheat him (an example of recent 'history', fictive or factual), while providing advice on the blessings of justice, the necessity of hard work, and the seasons and tasks of the agricultural year. Firmly set in human time, the poem includes other references to the past—notably the migration of the speaker's father from Ionia to Boeotia (633–40). The *Works and Days* also presents a broad overview of successive ages of mankind (109–201): from the Gold Race (*genos*) to Silver to Bronze to the Heroes, and down to the narrator's own dismal Iron Race that will some day vanish into oblivion, at which point he suggests (174–6) a better era may begin again. The view of history as a succession of distinct human kinds, with different moral and physical characteristics, is in its discontinuities far from typical of Greek literature about the past. Its closest analogies are with Near Eastern texts.[13]

Many other poetic texts dealing with the Hellenic past, and composed in the special language and metre of archaic epic, were circulating before the time of Herodotus. Most of these are extant only as brief fragments and summaries. A number of shorter epics, traditionally attributed to poets other than (and later than) Homer, dealt with traditions of the Trojan War (the 'Cyclic Epics'), or with heroic sagas set in an even more remote past, such as the Oedipus story and subsequent battles at Thebes, the voyage of the *Argo*, and the deeds of Heracles.[14] Given the sparse remains of this body of texts, we can do little more than speculate about the view of history—such as the degree of historical causality, contingency, and continuity—found in individual works. It appears that a number (perhaps all) of these epics included speeches, at least, making it likely that human deliberations and motives received some degree of narrative attention, although compared to the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* the tenor of the later epics is more fantastic and less 'humanistic'.

Of special interest is the popular *Catalogue of Women*, attributed to Hesiod— a series of short tales about women who bore children to gods (reminiscent of the end of the *Theogony*), interspersed with stories about their descendants.[15] These

[12] For example, Latinos (*Theog.* 1013) and Medeios (*Theog.* 1001).

[13] See Martin L. West (ed.), *Hesiod: Works and Days* (Oxford, 1978), 172–7.

[14] On the Cyclic Epics, see Malcolm Davies, *The Epic Cycle* (Bristol, 1989); and Jonathan S. Burgess, *The Tradition of the Trojan War in Homer and the Epic Cycle* (Baltimore, 2001).

[15] On catalogue poetry, see Ian Rutherford, 'Formulas, Voice, and Death in *Ehoie*-Poetry, the Hesiodic *Gunaikon Katalogos*, and the Odyssean *Nekuia*', in Mary Depew and Dirk Obbink (eds.), *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), 81–96, and Richard Hunter (ed.), *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women: Constructions and Reconstructions* (Cambridge, 2005).

entertaining and sometimes bizarre accounts were linked to one another, more or less, through genealogical and geographical connections. In contrast to the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, they are often fantastic yet straightforward narratives with (as far as we can tell) little in the way of speeches, flashbacks, and foreshadowings. Being both less mimetic (or dramatic) and more fantastic than the Homeric epics, and seemingly less concerned with representing complexities of historical causation, this important poetic corpus nonetheless succeeded in establishing a widely known 'heroic past' linked to many families and communities in its evidently Panhellenic audience.

CIVIC AND PERSONAL PASTS IN ELEGY AND LYRIC

Other archaic poems with 'historical' content were composed in the vivid personae of individual poets addressing an immediate audience, as opposed to the nearly invisible narrator, Homer. Often conventionally grouped as 'personal lyric' (or 'lyric and elegy'), these relatively short works are composed, not in epic hexameters, but in elegiac couplets (closely related to epic in metre and dialect—and very seldom associated with 'elegiac' themes in the modern sense) and in other metres, including some catchy stanzaic forms. Sadly, these poems exist now mostly in fragments, quoted by later writers or preserved on recovered scraps of papyrus rolls. Among the best known of such poets from the seventh and sixth centuries are Archilochus, Tyrtaeus, Mimnermus, Alcaeus, Sappho, Theognis, and Solon. Each of these is associated with a different community (except for Alcaeus and Sappho, both from Mytilene on Lesbos), and each refers at least allusively to local history.

References to the past can be framed as a positive model or encouragement for the poet's contemporary audience. For this reason, perhaps, Mimnermus (of Ionian Colophon or Smyrna) recalls a warrior who fought fiercely against the Lydians (fr. 14 W). Other historical narratives commemorate accomplishments of the community as a political or military entity. So Tyrtaeus, addressing Spartans, recalls the Delphic oracle's past advice to their city about political decision-making ('the god-honoured kings are to initiate counsel...and the aged elders, then the men of the people are to respond with straight speech and do all things justly' [fr. 4 W]). In another elegy he celebrates the Spartan conquest of Messenia after 'the fathers of our fathers' fought over it for twenty years (fr. 5 W). The much more distant past of the Trojan War era provides the speaker with analogues in several poems of Sappho. In one song she recalls that when the Atreid kings, returning home from Troy, landed on Lesbos, they could not sail away until they prayed to Hera (along with Zeus and Dionysus), whom the speaker now asks for assistance (fr. 17 LP); in another she uses Helen's fabled love for Paris to illustrate the fact that everyone is motivated by *eros* (fr. 16 LP).

The recent past—in fact the accomplishments of the speaker himself—is the subject of elegiac verses attributed to Solon, a famous lawgiver of Athens during a time of political turmoil. Speaking in the first person, he renders account of his reforms (fr. 36 W), and maintains that he favoured neither the ordinary people nor the rich, but kept both sides from an unjust victory (fr. 5 W).

Other elegiac and lyric poems also describe events from the perspective of one (the 'I' of the poem) who participated in them. In a famous short poem of Archilochus, the speaker tells how he escaped alive from battle with the Saians, but had to leave his shield behind. This was scarcely an heroic action, but he concludes insouciantly, 'What does that shield mean to me? Let it go, I'll get one just as good again' (fr. 5 W). The lyric poet Alcaeus of Lesbos is credited with a similar poem: 'Alcaeus is safe, but the Athenians hung up his shield in grey-eyed Athena's temple' (fr. 428 LP = 401(b) V). In a number of tantalizing fragments, Alcaeus refers to civil strife among factions in Mytilene (for example, frr. 6, 69, 70, 130B, 141 LP), and to his own exile from the city. Many generations later, Herodotus soberly mentions the episode of Alcaeus' shield while discussing the old fight between Athens and Lesbos for control of Sigeum, near the site of Troy (5.95). Here we see a transformation of poetic context and intent: what probably began as an ironical snippet for a circle of insiders[16] becomes an historical datum for a later and more general audience.[17]

It is widely accepted that elegiac and lyric poems were circulated in the quasi-ritualized drinking parties known as symposia, which for centuries constituted an important feature of elite Greek male culture, both testing and reaffirming the status and social bonds of participants.[18] Allusions, serious or ironic, to a common past and its values would well suit such a setting.

We also have traces of longer elegies, however, that seem less appropriate for symposia than for performance at local public festivals.[19] One theme attested in such works is the foundation and history of Greek cities, especially in areas such as Ionia, North Africa, or Sicily, that were settled by migrants from the Greek mainland. Mimnermus' lost elegy *Smyrneis*, for example, is thought to have covered the history of the city of Smyrna from its legendary foundation by the Amazon of that name.[20] Foundation stories were also transmitted in the hexameters of epic. These include a 7,000-line poem on the foundation of Ionian cities (also no longer extant), attributed to Panyassis of Halicarnassus, said to be a

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[16] See Claude Calame, *The Craft of Poetic Speech in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, 1995), esp. 27–57 on archaic lyric as historical writing for a performance group.

[17] Similarly, Herodotus refers to people and incidents mentioned by Sappho (2.135); Andrew Ford, *The Origins of Criticism*, 147.

[18] Ibid. See also Oswyn Murray (ed.), *Sympotica: A Symposium on the Symposium* (Oxford, 1990).

[19] Ewen L. Bowie, 'Early Greek Elegy, Symposium, and Public Festival', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 106 (1986), 13–35, at pp. 27–35. This hypothesis appeared to many to be strengthened by the appearance of the 'new Simonides'.

[20] Bowie, 'Early Greek Elegy', 28–9.

relative of Herodotus, who was active in the early to mid fifth century. The much earlier (and very shadowy) figure Eumelus is named as author of a long work in hexameters on the origins of Corinth.

City-foundation and colonization narratives sometimes appear in the poetic forms associated with choruses—epinician odes for victorious athletes, parthenia ('maiden songs'), paeans in praise of gods or cities. Choral songs, performed by age- and gender-defined groups at festivals of various kinds, were 'well suited to the ongoing re-enactment and public negotiation of the story of a city's origins.'[21] These poetic 'histories' tend to include narrative motifs—rape or marriage, riddle-solving, murder and purification—that may serve as mythical displacements for the historical violence and 'civic crisis' that lay behind the process of colonization.[22] Pindar, for example, in several poems praising athletes from Cyrene in Libya, recounts various phases in the city's foundation: Apollo fell in love with the Lapith princess Cyrene and took her to Libya to make her a queen (*Pythian* 9.1–70); Medea prophesied to the Argonauts that after seventeen generations a descendant of Euphemus, one of their number, would lead a settlement to Libya (*Pythian* 4.1–57); that man, Battus of Thera, at last founded the city with Apollo's blessing (*Pythian* 5.55–95). Mythologized history like this provides its audience with a meaningful past that can suggest the human problems and costs, as well as the divine origins and dynamics, of new beginnings.

The forty-six extant epinician odes of Pindar and fourteen partly surviving examples from Bacchylides include a great deal of 'historical' material, as indeed do the fragments of other kinds of choral songs they wrote.[23] While honouring a competitor who has just won an event in one of the major Panhellenic games (for example, at Olympia or Delphi), the poet often salutes his family as well, including forebears who won in earlier contests. In addition, the poet typically introduces an analogy with an ancient hero, or draws a lesson from a tale of gods and men in the distant past. Bacchylides' most famous epinician, for example, tells how Croesus, king of Lydia (r. 560–546) and a notable figure in Herodotus' *Histories*, was miraculously rescued by Zeus from self-immolation as his city was being captured, and was removed by Apollo to the (mythical) Hyperboreans (*Epinician* 3.23–66). This mythologized history illustrates the pattern of divine favour in return for dedicating generous gifts to the gods—as practised conspicuously by Hieron of Syracuse, the celebrand of the ode. Tales from the past clearly give a special cachet to praise and advice in the present.

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[21] Carol Dougherty, *The Poetics of Colonization: From City to Text in Archaic Greece* (Oxford, 1993), 84.

[22] Ibid., esp. pp. 8–9 and ch. 5.

[23] On historical narrative in Pindar see Simon Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar* (Oxford, 2004), esp. ch. 4; and Jonas Grethlein, *The Greeks and their Past: Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth Century BCE* (Cambridge, 2010), ch. 2. On intersections between Pindar's past and Herodotus, see Nagy, *Pindar's Homer*, 215–338.

In one ode, Pindar explicitly 'corrects' a version of the past that does not coincide with the view of the gods that his poem is fostering. The gods could not have boiled and eaten the flesh of the prince Pelops, he says, at a banquet Pelops' father hosted for them. Rather, Pelops disappeared from the banquet because Poseidon fell in love with the handsome youth and spirited him away to the Olympians' home, returning him when he came of age (*Olympian* 1.37–53). It is rare for a poetic narrator to overtly replace a traditional tale with a new version. As we will see, a similar critical attitude (somewhat differently motivated) toward the trustworthiness of accounts of the past can be found, on occasion, in the prose historians Herodotus and Thucydides a few decades later.[24]

CELEBRATING RECENT DEEDS: THE PERSIAN WARS IN EARLY FIFTH-CENTURY POETRY

Recent civic history also plays a role in praise poetry. In several songs in different genres, Pindar alludes to the role played by those who fought against the great Persian invasion of the Greek mainland (480–479). An epinician ode celebrating an athlete from the island of Aegina, for example, after calling to mind exploits of the legendary Aeginetan hero Aeacus and his grandson Achilles, turns to his city's role in the battle of Salamis (480): 'Recently in war Salamis, the city of Ajax, could attest that it was preserved by her sailors during Zeus' devastating rain, that hailstorm of gore for countless men' (*Isthmian* 5.48–50). In various kinds of choral poetry, Pindar bestows comparable praise on other cities as well, alluding to their roles in different battles of the same conflict. All this is celebratory poetry addressed primarily to insiders. It does not provide information so much as highlight recent bravery, in songs doubtless intended for festive public performance.

Our knowledge of poems dealing with this era received a boost in 1992. In that year a papyrus was published consisting of substantial elegiac fragments of Simonides,[25] some of which—including an unusually long passage (fr. 11 W², with 45 partial lines)—commemorate a very recent event, the battle of Plataea, where in 479 Greeks from some thirty cities defeated the Persian forces and their 'medizing' Greek allies.[26] Simonides explicitly draws a parallel between that

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[24] On Pindaric criticism of Homer in other passages see Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 291–3.

[25] Peter J. Parsons (ed.), '3965: Simonides, Elegies', in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 49 (1992), 4–50.

[26] For discussions of the 'new Simonides' as historical poetry, see Martin L. West, 'Simonides Redivivus', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 98 (1993), 1–14; Ewen L. Bowie, 'Ancestors of Historiography in Early Greek Elegiac and Iambic Poetry?' in Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*, 44–66; the essays in Deborah Boedeker and David Sider (eds.), *New Simonides: Contexts of Praise and Desire* (Oxford, 2001); and Sider, 'The New Simonides and the Question of Historical Elegy,' *American Journal of Philology* 127 (2006): 327–346.

victory and the Greek sack of Troy: just as Homer, through the Muses, brought undying glory to the heroes who took Troy, so the poet now asks *his* Muse to help him bring fame to the Spartans who marched to Plataea (fr. 11.15–36). Significantly, like the Trojan War, the conflict with Xerxes involved much of the Greek world. In this and other fragments of the papyrus, Simonides also mentions other Greek allies (Megara, Corinth, probably Athens, and others) as well as Persians, and nods to the influence of gods and heroes as well.[27]

Not only Pindaric songs and the 'new Simonides' elegy, but other pre-Herodotean poems also refer to events of the Persian Wars.[28] Many epitaphs for those who fought and died in the conflicts (indeed, nearly all such inscriptions and their later imitations!) are attributed to Simonides, rightly or wrongly; so are elegiac and lyric poems on other battles of the war (Artemisium, Salamis), now lost except for a few words. Simonides also composed a lyric poem honouring the Spartans who fell at Thermopylae, which includes the passage 'glorious is their lot and fair their fate; their tomb is an altar; they are remembered not lamented, praised instead of pitied…' (Sim. 531 *PMG*). Like Pindar's choral tributes to cities that fought against the Persians, this song does not narrate past action: it purports not to inform but to commemorate in praise.[29]

ATHENIAN TRAGEDY AS AN HISTORICAL GENRE

All Athenian tragedies present actions set in the past—almost always a distant 'heroic' past when even gods might intervene perceptibly, as they do in Homeric epic, in the lives of those famed, larger-than-life men and women whose crises are dramatized. Such scenarios are far removed from the world of the democratic Athenian audience that came to see the dramas at great annual festivals. Unlike the other poetic genres we have considered, tragedies of course present past actions mimetically, as if they were taking place 'live' before the eyes of the audience. The characters (even the chorus) speak or sing consistently in their own personae. The combination of impressively staged historical difference (including grand costumes, and often a regal setting before the palace door), together with heightened visual and aural immediacy, gives tragedy a special place in the realm of poetry about the past.

Like all who represent the past, whatever their medium, tragic poets too are inevitably in touch with, and influenced by, present circumstances—and they

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[27] See West, 'Simonides Redivivus', 8; Simon Hornblower, 'Epic and Epiphanies: Herodotus and the "New Simonides"', in Boedeker and Sider (eds.), *New Simonides*, 135–47; and Boedeker 'Heroic Historiography: Simonides and Herodotus on Plataea', ibid., 120–34, at pp. 129–30.

[28] See Kelly MacFarlane, '"To Lay the Shining Foundation…": The Theme of the Persian Wars in Classical Greek Poetry', D.Phil. thesis, University of Alberta, 2002.

[29] John Dillery, 'Reconfiguring the Past: Thyrea, Thermopylae and Narrative Patterns in Herodotus', *The American Journal of Philology*, 117 (1996), 217–54.

allow themselves a great deal of latitude in selecting, developing, motivating, and sometimes changing familiar story lines. Not infrequently we can discern a strong correlation between dramatic action and contemporary concerns.[30] In the *Eumenides*, the final play of the *Oresteia* trilogy produced in 458,[31] Aeschylus has Orestes, freed by an Athenian court from punishment for matricide, swear a great oath that his city of Argos will never attack Athens (*Eum.* 762–74). With this, the ancient hero foretells, as it were, the historical treaty that the two cities made (to the detriment of Sparta) just three years before the tragedy's performance. Moreover, the play vividly dramatizes the foundation by Athena herself of the Athenian council of the Areopagus (announced at *Eum.* 470–84). The make-up and jurisdiction of that august body was a contentious topic for many Athenians in 458. Membership in the Areopagus council was opening up to a larger segment of the population with the rapid process of democratization. Shortly before the *Oresteia*, some of its powers were transferred to the popular assembly and to democratic courts with their large panels of ordinary citizens.[32] Opinions vary widely about Aeschylus' 'message' or political stance with regard to such institutional changes (though not to his championing of civic harmony). What is clear is that the 'past' dramatized in his drama not only calls to mind present circumstances, but grounds them in an ancient and dynamic world. Richard Rutherford has summarized it well: 'Certainly the tragedies are rich in anachronisms and aetiologies: they often prefigure or predict institutions, cultic practices, and dilemmas of the poet's own time.'[33]

Three early tragedies, the latest produced in 472, took their subject matter, not from the heroic (mythical) past, but from recent events, all centring on Greek/Persian conflicts. Phrynichus, an earlier contemporary of Aeschylus, presented his *Sack of Miletus* probably in 493, a year after that Ionian city fell again to Persia after a revolt that lasted six years.[34] Herodotus (6.21) tells us that

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[30] Christopher Pelling, 'Conclusion', in id. (ed.), *Greek Tragedy and the Historian* (Oxford, 1997), 213–35, adroitly discusses the ways in which tragedy can, and cannot, provide 'evidence' for historical Athenian attitudes. Suzanne Saïd, 'Tragedy and Politics', in Deborah Boedeker and Kurt Raaflaub (eds.), *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), 275–95, at pp. 278–81, argues that tragedy does not directly mirror particular events.

[31] Alan H. Sommerstein (ed.), *Aeschylus Eumenides* (Cambridge, 1989), 25–32, provides a concise discussion of contemporary issues reflected in this play.

[32] For an introduction to the immense topic of poetry, politics, and history, see Kurt Raaflaub, 'Poets, Lawgivers, and the Beginnings of Political Reflection in Archaic Greece', in Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2000), 23–59; Suzanne Saïd, 'Herodotus and Tragedy', in Egbert Bakker, Irene J.F. de Jong, and Hans van Wees (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden, 2002), 117–48; Deborah Boedeker and Kurt Raaflaub, 'Tragedy and City', in Rebecca Bushnell (ed.), *A Companion to Tragedy* (Oxford, 2005), 109–27; and Pelling (ed.), *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*.

[33] Richard Rutherford, 'Tragedy and History', in John Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (Oxford, 2007), 504–14, at p. 508.

[34] On the historical plays of Phrynichus, see Joseph Roisman, 'On Phrynicus' *Sack of Miletus* and *Phoenissai*,' *Eranos*, 86 (1988), 15–23; and MacFarlane, *Persian Wars,* 105–17, with further bibliography.

the poet was fined for reminding the Athenians of their own sufferings. This is the only time we hear of such a response, which demonstrates that the dramatic rehearsal of 'tragic' events required a certain distancing from the audience to be acceptable.

Phrynichus' later *Phoenissai* (476, now lost except for a handful of scattered lines), and Aeschylus' extant *Persai* (472) dealt with a more auspicious topic: the battle of Salamis (480), in which Athenians and other Hellenes defeated Xerxes' forces at sea. Both plays present the drama from the perspective of the Persian court as it learns of the defeat, which allows for a typically tragic rather than a triumphalist perspective on events—and at least in Aeschylus, a rather sympathetic one, in which Xerxes must come to terms with the disaster his overreaching has caused. Mixed with the sensitivity to human suffering is a good measure of Hellenic pride and praise: the unexpected victory of the Greeks over a mighty armada gets its full share of attention, the leadership of Athens is highlighted, and the emerging ideals of political freedom (rather than 'slavery' to Persia) and Hellenic moderation (as opposed to Persian luxury and emotional excess) are clearly formulated. Some readers also find an implicit warning to Athens not to become the next imperialistic over-reacher.

With the *Persai*, as with the 'new Simonides', we get a privileged look into the making (*poiesis*) of history. Recent events are cast in familiar poetic forms, which help to fix them in memory while raising them to a different level: the actions of contemporaries are made analogous to those of ancient (and quite literally, revered) heroes, while the workings of divine favour and justice can be discerned just behind the scenes. Such works do not primarily *inform* an audience of 'what happened' (although this aspect is not wholly absent from them), but help *create* a past for their audience that has meaning, significance, and resonance.

The scope of 'historical poetry' down to the time of Herodotus and Thucydides is vast. It ranges, as we have seen, from Hesiod's sweeping cosmology, to the Panhellenic heroic traditions of Homeric epic, to the creation and commemoration of local traditions, to self-conscious reminiscences framed in a personal voice, to the praise of hero-worthy deeds in the immediate past, to the dramatization of ancient crises in ways that evoke present concerns. Its purposes and effects are many, and undoubtedly change depending on the context in which a text is received. It is time now to turn to the manifold interactions between poetic history and the first prose historians.

HERODOTUS AND THUCYDIDES
VERSUS POETS AS HISTORIANS

> It is a big—or rather, an enormous—flaw, if somebody doesn't know how to separate the historical from the poetical.
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> Lucian, *How to Write History* 8 (*c.* AD 165)

Several generations after Herodotus' and Thucydides' works were disseminated, and some four centuries before Lucian wrote his pungent essay, 'history' had become a well-recognized literary genre. In a famous passage, Aristotle considers how *historia* differs from poetry (*poiesis*). He posits that poetry is 'more philosophical and more serious' than history, because the poet (*poietes* 'maker') presents things that would be likely or necessary to take place, regardless of whether they actually did occur, rather than recording individual facts that just happened to happen—as Aristotle puts it, 'what Alcibiades did or what was done to him' (*Poetics* 9.1451a–b).[35] Aristotle considers *poesis* a superior kind of literature because it allows greater scope to the author's 'making' or 'fiction', to constructive and philosophical thought. History, in contrast, seems bound to reconstruct haphazard *Realien* as best it can: not an equally worthy intellectual or moral goal.

Both Herodotus and Thucydides had already pointed to similar distinctions between their own aims and those of poets (perhaps surprisingly, given the large and well-known differences between the two historians), but they evaluate them differently from Aristotle. Rather like Lucian in the essay quoted above, each calls into question the accuracy of poetic, especially Homeric, accounts. Herodotus refers dubiously to place-names 'invented' or 'made' by a poet, such as the rivers Okeanos and Eridanus (2.23, 3.115.2), and even to a theogony 'made' for the Greeks by Homer and Hesiod (2.53.2)—so much for the poets' Muse-inspired knowledge! Further, he agrees, on grounds of plausibility, with the Egyptian priests who told him (he says) that Helen never went to Troy, but stayed in Egypt until Menelaus retrieved her there after the Trojan War (2.116–20). That Helen was not in Troy (a variant already known in a lost work of the sixth-century lyric poet Stesichorus) obviously contradicts Homeric tradition. Herodotus himself explains the variance in terms of the generic expectations of epic. Several passages in *Iliad* and *Odyssey* suggest that Homer knew the 'Helen in Egypt' story, but he chose not to use it because the tale that Helen went to Troy was more suitable (*euprepes*) for epic-making (*epopoien* [2.116.1]).[36]

Thucydides is more explicit than Herodotus about his methodology and his aim to present the past accurately. Poetic history (and probably Herodotus too, although he is never mentioned by name) suffers all the more by comparison. Several times in his 'Archaeology', an overview of Greek development (mainly with respect to power) down to the Persian Wars (1.2–23), he uses the *Iliad* as evidence from which to construct the conditions of earlier times (for example, at

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[35] For a recent critique of Aristotle on poetry and historiography, see Carlo Scardino, *Gestaltung und Funktion der Reden bei Herodot und Thukydides* (Berlin, 2007), 28–35.

[36] See Barbara Graziosi, *Inventing Homer: The Early Reception of Epic* (Cambridge, 2002), 113–8; Deborah Boedeker, 'Herodotus's Genre(s)', in Mary Depew and Dirk Obbink (eds.), *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, Society* (Cambridge, Mass. 2000), 97–114, at pp. 103–7; and Ford, *The Origins of Criticism*, 146–52.

1.3.3, 1.9.4, 1.10.4). Such evidence is suspect, however, because of poets' tendencies to exaggerate their subject matter (1.10.3). Unfortunately, Thucydides maintains, most people uncritically accept any and all traditions about the past. His own rational criteria will prove more reliable in recovering 'ancient things (*ta palaia*)' than the merely aesthetic aims that are reflected in what 'the poets have sung in praise (*hymnekasi*) about them, for the most part making them attractive (*kosmountes* [1.21.1])'.[37]

One sign of this self-conscious role as a critic of traditions is the explicit use of an authorial first person. Foregoing reliance on a Muse, in contrast to the narrator of epic, each begins his work by announcing authorship: 'Herodotus of Halicarnassus here displays his research...'; 'Thucydides, an Athenian, recorded the war of the Peloponnesians and Athenians...'. After taking responsibility for researching and putting together the text that is to follow, each must establish his narrative authority. As is well known, their methods for doing this differ greatly—partly in ways related to their chosen subject matter. In general, Thucydides' work is focused on contemporary history—events he experienced or could learn about from first-hand witnesses (Thuc. 1.1, 1.22). Thucydides informs us that he has gathered and weighed the evidence in order to present the most accurate possible account of what happened (1.21–22). He privileges autopsy over hearsay, and seldom belabours his reader with alternative versions of events.

Herodotus' methods for establishing credibility are even more complex. His subject matter is much broader in time and place, covering the rise of the Persian Empire from the mid sixth century, and culminating in battles between Greeks and Persians that took place more than half a century (490–479) before his work was completed. He relies on autopsy of some places or customs he describes, but not of the events themselves. For these he has many human sources, with varying degrees of credibility.[38] He sets his task as 'to say what was said' (Hdt. 7.152.3), rather than to arrive, Thucydides-style, at the most accurate account in every case; yet at times Herodotus too makes a point of deciding the most likely among several different versions (for example, 6.75, 84 on the reason for Cleomenes' bizarre death, 7.214 on the identity of the Greek who betrayed the Spartans defending Thermopylae). Unlike both Thucydides and Homer, Herodotus the researcher is very often present in his narrative, showing his hand as he collects, orders, and sometimes evaluates his multifarious reports (*logoi*). His narrative authority comes largely from this self-conscious struggle with a confusing database—which includes reports by poets—and the superior perspective his research has given him.[39]

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[37] This famous passage is also discussed by Grethlein in this volume; see also Graziosi, *Inventing Homer*, 118–23.

[38] See Calame, *The Craft of Poetic Speech in Ancient Greece*, 85–8 on Herodotus' varying levels of trust in his sources; Boedeker, 'Herodotus's Genre(s)', 102.

[39] Carolyn Dewald, 'Narrative Surface and Authorial Voice in Herodotus' *Histories*', in Deborah Boedeker (ed.), *Herodotus and the Invention of History* (1987), 147–70, at pp. 147–50, concisely discusses the different narrative roles of the two historians.

For all their differences from one another, then, both Herodotus and Thucydides present their work as better researched, more dispassionate, and hence more trustworthy than that of poets who preceded them. It requires no great effort to suppose that a certain 'anxiety of influence' vis-à-vis the incomparably influential Homer is at work in their claims to authority. This is nowhere more apparent than when both Herodotus and Thucydides say that *their* war is greater than the Trojan War (Hdt. 7.20.2; Thuc. 1.1, 1.10.3–4): not only their methods but also their subject matter is superior. (Thucydides' Peloponnesian War is also much greater than Herodotus' Persian War [Thuc. 1.23.1–4]).[40] Even acknowledging the competitive motive in their claims, however, there is every reason to believe that Herodotus and Thucydides *also* pursue a different objective in creating their histories from the many kinds of historical poetry we have surveyed. By no means, however, do they (or could they) remain uninfluenced by those songs and their pervasive role in making and conveying the Hellenic past.

INTERACTION: POETRY, HERODOTUS, THUCYDIDES

Despite their authors' declaration of independence and superiority, the *Histories* and *History of the Peloponnesian War* are deeply affected by their poetic predecessors—at times incorporating material drawn from them, paying homage by recalling distinctive linguistic or thematic turns, or using analogous means (and even meanings) in constructing the narrative. Ancient readers certainly perceived a relationship with poetry. A literary critic in the first century AD intended high praise when he included Herodotus among the 'most Homeric' of Greek writers;[41] the historian's hometown of Halicarnassus had already publicly hailed him as 'the prose Homer of historiography'.[42] The literary critic and historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus called Thucydides the closest prose counterpart to Pindar, both exponents of the 'austere' style: unbalanced, often harsh to the ear, but strong and impressive (*On Literary Composition* 22; more succinctly, *On Demosthenes* 39).[43] Thucydides' biographer, Marcellinus, wrote that his subject emulated Homer in his 'word choice, precision of composition, strength of interpretation, and beauty and swiftness', and Pindar in his 'grandeur and loftiness of style'.[44]

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[40] On Herodotus' claim to superiority see Marincola, 'Herodotus and Poetry', 16.

[41] 'Longinus', *On the Sublime* 13.3.

[42] In a Hellenistic inscription recently discovered at Halicarnassus; Signe Isager, 'The Pride of Halicarnassos: Editio Princeps of an Inscription from Salmakis', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 123 (1999), 1–23.

[43] See Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 269–372 (esp. pp. 354–72) for a magisterial discussion of Pindaric and Thucydidean literary methods and style.

[44] Marcellinus (sixth century AD), *Vita Thucydidis* 37, 35.

POETIC ACCOUNTS AS 'SOURCES' FOR HISTORIOGRAPHY

Perhaps the most straightforward relationship between poets and historians is the use of poetic narrative as an historical source, especially for 'ancient' events for which epic provides the sole or primary testimony.[45] Homeric accounts of the Trojan War clearly stand behind both the 'Archaeology' section of Thucydides (1.2–23),[46] for example, and the 'ancient hostility' between Europe and Asia that Herodotus attributes to his Persian sources (1.1–5). Poetic traditions inevitably shaped the distant past for Herodotus and Thucydides, but explicit references to poetic sources are rare in both historians,[47] and as we have seen, they tend to be critical.

Non-epic forms of historical poetry appear to have influenced Herodotus' account at some junctures, of which the following few examples are representative. I have argued elsewhere that Simonides' account of the battle of Plataea (479) was among Herodotus' sources for his description of that event.[48] Elsewhere, the thoughtful Solon (or the elegiac and iambic poetry under his name) bears a partial resemblance to Herodotus' historical actor Solon, who tries to advise the immensely wealthy Lydian king Croesus that human life is uncertain, riches are transient, and happiness cannot be measured in gold (1.29–33).[49] Herodotus' Croesus himself may owe something to poetic narrative. In a tale Herodotus says the Lydians tell, when the king was about to perish on a burning pyre as his city was taken by Cyrus' army, he was miraculously saved by a sudden thunderstorm that quenched the flames, thanks to his generosity to Delphic Apollo (1.86–87). Decades before Herodotus' *Histories*, Bacchylides had presented a still more spectacular version of the story, in which Croesus and his daughters were carried off to the Hyperboreans after their rescue (*Epinician* 3.23–66, mentioned above). If indeed this lyric account served as a source, Herodotus (citing the Lydian story) has recast it in a somewhat more 'realistic' and more problematic, even tragic, spirit.[50]

Athenian tragedy too seems to have provided grist for Herodotus' mill. He tells us, as we have seen, that Phrynichus' *Sack of Miletus* cost the playwright a

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[45] Hans-Joachin Gehrke, 'Myth, History, and Collective Identity: Uses of the Past in Ancient Greece and Beyond', in Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*, 282–313, at pp. 298–9 on Greek poetry and historiography as typical sources for history, and poets as sources for historians.

[46] See Nicolai, 'Thucydides' Archaeology'.

[47] Suzanne Saïd, 'Myth and Historiography', in Marincola (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, 76–88, at p. 82; and Calame, *The Craft of Poetic Speech in Ancient Greece*, 82.

[48] Deborah Boedeker, 'Heroic Historiography'.

[49] Charles C. Chiasson, 'The Herodotean Solon', *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 27 (1986), 249–62.

[50] Charles Segal, 'Croesus on the Pyre: Herodotus and Bacchylides', *Wiener Studien*, 84 (1971), 39–51; and Gregory Crane, 'The Prosperity of Tyrants: Bacchylides, Herodotus, and the Contest for Legitimacy', *Arethusa*, 29 (1996), 57–85.

fine for reminding the Athenians of their own sufferings in 493 (6.21), and a prohibition on any future production of the drama. Assuming that Herodotus knew the play, he could have drawn on it as a source for his account of the Ionian revolt. In any case, the audience might perceive a subtle difference between poet and historian: Herodotus *does* report on the sufferings of Greeks and Persians alike. More certain is the influence of Aeschylus' *Persai* on Herodotus' account of the battle of Salamis (480). A number of verbal and thematic echoes show that he was familiar with the play: like Aeschylus (*Persai* 50), for example, he uses the image of the 'yoke of slavery' (Hdt. 7.8.3) for Persian power over Greeks.[51] Unlike Aeschylus, however, Herodotus' account of Salamis emphasizes the fragility of the Greek alliance. This, and many other divergences, lead most recent scholars to consider the differences between the accounts more compelling than the resemblances: Herodotus may draw from tragic, elegiac, and lyric accounts of historic actions, but does not apply the same perspective to them.[52]

POETIC RESONANCE IN HERODOTUS AND THUCYDIDES

Thucydides did not write about the battle of Salamis, but he may have been even more influenced by the *Persai* than was Herodotus. In his suspenseful description of the sea-battle between Athens and Syracuse in 413 (7.71), both armies on shore watch spellbound while the action progresses. As their fleet loses the crucial battle, the Athenians react with horror, much as Aeschylus' Persians were said to react to the sea-battle at Salamis (*Persai* 384–432, 447–71).[53] As the crisis worsens and their defeat is certain, Thucydides' Athenians even echo the tragic Persians by their 'wailing' (*oimôgê* [Thuc. 7.71.6, *Persai* 426]). This rare poetic word is attested in Thucydides only here and a little later, when the Athenians retreat from Syracuse after their loss (7.75.4); *oimôgê* appears several times in Sophocles and Euripides, but nowhere else in Aeschylus' surviving plays.[54] Significantly, it is also used in half a dozen dramatic passages in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In fact, as June Allison has shown, the densest concentration of Homeric language in all of Thucydides appears to come in his description of the disastrous end of the Sicilian Expedition.[55]

[51] Charles Chiasson, 'Herodotus' Use of Attic Tragedy in the Lydian Logos', *Classical Antiquity*, 22 (2003), 5–35, at p. 32.

[52] Chiasson, 'Herodotus' Use of Attic Tragedy'; Saïd, 'Herodotus and Tragedy'; and Christopher Pelling, 'Aeschylus' *Persae* and History', in id. (ed.), *Greek Tragedy and the Historian*, 1–19.

[53] John H. Finley, Jr., 'Euripides and Thucydides', in *Three Essays on Thucydides* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 47.

[54] The word is attested, however, in an Aeschylean fragment, P. Oxy. 2256.82.7.

[55] June Allison, 'Homeric Allusions at the Close of Thucydides' Sicilian Narrative', *American Journal of Philology*, 118 (1997), 499–514.

Poetic words and expressions, even phrases that (nearly) scan as epic hexameters, or occasionally as the iambic trimeters of tragic speech, are well attested in Herodotus and Thucydides. It will not surprise most readers of Thucydides that these occur most frequently in his 'epic' books 6 and 7, and in the Funeral Oration of Pericles, praising those who died in the first year of war—despite Pericles' protestation that Athens 'needs no Homer' to record its greatness (2.41.4). In Herodotus, poetic diction—more common overall than in Thucydides—is especially perceptible in his narratives of battles and their aftermath. Following the victory at Salamis, for example, the Spartans demand that Xerxes make restitution for the death of their king Leonidas at Thermopylae (8.114). This speech, with its unmistakably heroic content, contains several near-hexameters.[56]

Often such expressions are best attributed to the familiarity and resonance of poetic language for the authors and many in their audiences, rather than to a specific textual allusion. Consciously or unconsciously, the aura of heroic or tragic action can be evoked by drawing on this register. On occasion, however, especially in speeches attributed to historical actors, poetic language derives from a specific text.[57] In such cases, intertextual resonance may enrich, or even undercut, the surface meaning of the prose account.[58]

One striking expression, the 'beginning of evils' (*archê kakôn*), is used by Herodotus and Thucydides at critical junctures: when Athens sends twenty ships to aid in the Ionian Revolt (Hdt. 5.97.3), and when the same city sends away the Spartan herald offering terms to prevent an outright attack by the Peloponnesians (Thuc. 2.12.3). The phrase strongly recalls the Homeric *nêas archekakous* 'ships beginning evils' that carried Paris from Troy to Sparta (*Il.* 4.62–3), and the innocent question, 'Was Machaon wounded?' that Achilles sends Patroclus to ask of Nestor, which marks the *kakou archê* 'beginning of evil' for the beloved warrior (*Il.* 11.604). 'Beginning of evils' is not just a poetic turn of phrase, but a point of contact between historical poetry and prose history. It marks an unforeseen turning point in a narrative of historical contingency. At the same time, the expression as used in Herodotus (possibly) and Thucydides (more certainly) may also evoke the contemporary Athenian *archê* (empire), and bring to mind the semantic shifts that signal changing circumstances.[59]

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[56] On Homeric resonances in Herodotus and/or Thucydides, see Simon Hornblower, 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Greek Historiography* (Oxford, 1994), 1–72, at pp. 64–9; Boedeker, 'Heroic Historiography', 121–4; and ead., 'Epic Heritage and Mythical Patterns in Herodotus', in Bakker et al. (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, 97–116.

[57] So conjectures Michael Haslam, 'Pericles Poeta', *Classical Philology*, 85 (1990), 33, on a perfect iambic trimeter at the conclusion of a speech of Pericles (Thuc. 2.61.2).

[58] Jonas Grethlein, 'The Manifold Uses of the Epic Past: The Embassy Scene in Herodotus 7.153–63', *American Journal of Philology*, 127 (2007), 485–509; and Boedeker, 'Epic Heritage and Mythical Patterns in Herodotus', 101–2.

[59] Rosaria Munson, 'The Trouble with the Ionians: Herodotus and the Beginning of the Ionian Revolt (5.28–38.1)', in Elizabeth Irwin and Emily Greenwood (eds.), *Reading Herodotus: A Study of the Logoi in Book Five of Herodotus' Histories* (Cambridge, 2007), 146–67, at pp. 152–3.

Both the *Histories* and the *History of the Peloponnesian War* are coloured, not only by verbal and metrical reminiscences of historical poetry (epic above all), but also by narrative tropes. We just saw how Thucydides' desperate Athenians at Syracuse resemble Aeschylus' Persians at Salamis. J. Gordon Howie has recently argued, moreover, that Thucydides models his extended description of the Spartan general Brasidas, complete with *aristeia* (heroic display of bravery), on the Achilles of the *Iliad*, the cyclic epic *Aethiopis*, and Pindaric accounts as well.[60] To turn to a conspicuous example from Herodotus: when the surviving Spartans at Thermopylae struggle with their Persian adversaries over the corpse of the valiant Leonidas (Hdt. 7.224–5), the audience would certainly think of the great Homeric struggle for the corpse of Patroclus (*Il.* 17.274–369).

Apart from analogies in 'type scenes' displaying the deeds and reactions of men at war, other narrative devices connect poetic history with early prose historiography. Lengthy catalogues display the narrator's authority and virtuosity, as we have seen, in Hesiodic as well as Homeric epic. As does the *Iliad* (2.493–760), so also both Herodotus (for example, 9.28.2–32.2, before Plataea) and Thucydides (for example, 7.57–58, before Syracuse) list all the contingents of opposing forces before a battle.[61] These lists commemorate the participants, while signalling the size and seriousness of the conflict about to take place. In a related phenomenon, actual numbers are reported for groups of individuals, especially battle units and casualties, in Homeric poetry as well as in the historians (numbers are used even more frequently in Hesiod). This device has the rhetorical effect of adding specificity and authority to an account, and improving the audience's ability to imagine the action. In a careful analysis, Catherine Rubincam has discovered that Herodotus and Thucydides each use numbers at almost exactly the same rate, about twice as often as do the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but that all four texts use 'typical' numbers (for example, 30, 300, 10,000) with nearly identical frequency (about half the time).[62]

NARRATIVE AUTHORITY AND NARRATIVE STRUCTURES

Establishing the narrator's authority to convey the past, through the appearance of exact knowledge among many other techniques, is a concern in both poetic and prose works.[63] In Homeric epic, the question of 'historical' accuracy arises

[60] J. Gordon Howie, 'The Aristeia of Brasidas: Thucydides' Presentation of Events at Pylos and Amphipolis', in Francis Cairns (ed.), *Papers of the Langford Latin Seminar*, vol. 12: *Greek and Roman Poetry, Greek and Roman Historiography* (Cambridge, 2005), 207–84.

[61] John Marincola and Michael Flower (eds.), *Herodotus: Histories Book IX* (Cambridge, 2002), 158 (on Hdt. 9.28.2–32.2) suggest that such catalogues also create 'narrative retardation'.

[62] Catherine Rubincam, 'Numbers in Greek Poetry and Historiography: Quantifying Fehling', *Classical Quarterly*, 53 (2003), 448–63.

[63] On this important question, see John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge, 1997).

pointedly during Odysseus' sojourn with the Phaeacians, when he hears the poet Demodokos sing of deeds that Odysseus himself took part in ten years earlier at Troy. He compliments the singer as one taught by the Muses or Apollo, for he describes things 'as if you had been there yourself, or heard it from someone who was' (*Od.* 8.485–92). Odysseus' approval of Demodokos' song, confirmed by his tearful reaction when he hears Demodokos sing (at his request!) of the Trojan Horse (8.521–34), gives the bard's tale a level of veracity apart from the rest of the epic, and pointedly raises the question of a narrator of past events 'getting it right'. Half a century ago, Hannah Arendt argued that this episode actually introduced the category of history, as confidence in the narrative depends not on the Muses and the bard who asks them to sing through him, but on a human who 'was there'.[64]

The early historians occasionally take it upon themselves to correct, or choose between, received accounts of the past—a gesture that has poetic precedent in Pindar's treatment of tradition. When Pindar 'corrects' the story that Demeter, distracted by her grief, cannibalized Pelops' shoulder (*Ol.* 1.37–53), he is applying a standard of (theological) plausibility and piety: a god could not behave like that.[65] Herodotus too at times chooses the more plausible version of several he has heard. This may be based on his view of human nature: when a valuable metal bowl went missing on its way to Croesus from his new ally Sparta, he notes that conflicting accounts were given of its fate, and clearly marks the self-exculpating report—it was stolen by pirates—as just what the Spartans conveying the bowl 'would say' in the circumstances (1.70.2–3). A different kind of plausibility, based on a concept of divine or cosmic justice, prevails, however, when Herodotus decides that Cleomenes must have ended his life dreadfully because he had wrongfully plotted the deposition of his fellow-king Demaratus (6.84). Thucydides too occasionally 'corrects' erroneous accounts of the past. With apparent exasperation, he points to a popular tradition that the Pisistratid Hipparchus was tyrant of Athens when he was slain by the famed 'Tyrannicides', Harmodius and Aristogeiton. Actually, Hipparchus' older brother Hippias was tyrant, and the assassination did *not* end the tyranny (1.20; cf. 6.54–59 for Thucydides' own detailed account of the event).

Even beyond these specific concerns, the works of both Herodotus and Thucydides also recall Homeric epic in large-scale narrative structure and techniques. This is especially evident in the sequencing of events, as Antonios Rengakos has recently argued in an illuminating study.[66] Herodotus' narrative

[64] Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (New York, 1954), 45.
[65] On 'methodology and causation' in other poetic and historiographical contexts, see Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 291–300.
[66] Antonios Rengakos, 'Homer and the Historians: The Influence of Epic Narrative Technique on Herodotus and Thucydides', in *La Poésie épique grecque: Métamorphoses d'un genre littéraire* (Geneva, 2006), 182–209; and Irene J. F. de Jong, 'Narrative Unity and Units', in Bakker *et al.* (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, 245–66.

recalls the complex structure of the *Odyssey* (and to a lesser extent the *Iliad*), in which the primary narrator's focus moves from one narrative thread to another, then back again, until the multiple strands of the *Histories* (the expansion of Persian power, the kaleidoscopic shifts of power and alliances within the Greek world) converge in the expedition of Xerxes against a scarcely united Hellas. Thucydides, after his more complex and synthetic first book, adheres to a relatively straightforward chronological account of events that took place in the war each winter and summer (as he explains in 2.1). Nonetheless, partly because of this strict chronological format, the main narrative is often interrupted to allow for accounts of simultaneous actions in other places.[67] Both historians, moreover, recall epic patterns in varying the speed of their narratives, by slowing the pace with background information (including catalogues and 'digressions')—often in the form of 'ring composition' or 'epic regression'[68]—by introducing scenes of deliberation and debate before important decisions are taken, and sometimes by adding a suspenseful twist by emphasizing factors that would point to a result different from what the audience knows 'really' happened, whether the plot is drawn from heroic tradition or from recent historical experience.[69]

TOWARD A CONCLUSION: HERODOTUS, THUCYDIDES, AND POETRY OF THE PAST

Despite all these interconnections, the first two major Greek historians clearly use discursive methods different from their poetic predecessors, and self-consciously define their projects as distinct from poetic (especially epic) narrative. Likewise, the expectations of an audience at a tragedy, or assembled to hear a rhapsode enchant them with a performance of Homeric epic, are very different from those who come to hear, or read, the compositions of Herodotus or Thucydides.

On the broadest level, however, central aspects of Homeric epic are reprised in both the *Histories* and the *History of the Peloponnesian War*: mimetic accounts of the deeds, words, and strategies of men at war or contemplating war, the defence of cities, the fate of armies and those who depend on them, the interwoven fabric of character and circumstances, and (particularly in Herodotus) a generous geographic and ethnographic range. Much attention is given, especially through direct speeches, to human plans, motives, values, and emotions. This emphasis on agency makes all the more striking the unforeseen factors (in poetry often

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[67] Rengakos, 'Homer and the Historians', 188–90; Tim Rood, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation* (Oxford, 1998); and Carolyn Dewald, *Thucydides' War Narrative: A Structural Study* (Berkeley, 2005).
[68] de Jong, 'Narrative Unity and Units', 260–1.
[69] Rengakos, 'Homer and the Historians', 190–7.

figured as gods or fate) that so often move events in a direction surprising or disappointing to the actors. Their stories are told with a certain dignity and magnanimity, even when tinged with pathos or blame. The narrator lets us see recurring patterns in human behaviour (including the 'heroic' tendency to go too far), and the fragility of success. Most of this pertains not only to epic, but to many tragedies as well, which focus on moments of conflict and crisis rather than the long span of time, and present the characters unmediated by a narrator. Common patterns of tragic action and character—not least the rise and fall of powerful figures and their painful recognition of unexpected reality—have long been recognized in Thucydides (at least as far back as Dionysius of Halicarnassus [Thuc. 15]),[70] and in Herodotus as well.[71]

These resemblances reflect not only the chronological priority of historical poetry (although I find it hard to imagine what or how Greek historiography would be in the absence of Homer), or its influence on one historian or the other (although at times this is apparent), but deeper affinities among their separate projects.[72] I will conclude by briefly mentioning three common features that, while hardly original, seem to me especially salient.

First: polyvocality. A great deal of historical poetry (tragedy and epic above all), along with both early historians, allow many voices to speak, and follow with interest the actions of many subjects.[73] It matters a great deal, of course, that the narrator (or dramatist) controls the speech of his characters as well as the events selected. Nevertheless, the shifting focus on differing ideas, expectations, knowledge, and motives not only makes the 'past' dynamic, but presents a compelling world in which multiple perspectives, not all of them equally wise or admirable, must be taken into account.

Second: open-endedness. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* famously look beyond the end of their narratives to the death of Achilles and fall of Troy, and the future journeys of Odysseus. Herodotus' *Histories* ends (in the view of many readers) with Athens, in the instant of victory, about to step into the role of the next tyrant state, and Herodotus refers to a number of events that post-date the end of his narrative. Thucydides' work is unfinished, and might have reached a more definitive ending, given his plan to record the twenty-seven-year war to its conclusion with the defeat of Athens (5.26.1), but this is speculation. Tragedies often end with the establishment of a cult or other practice contemporary with the performance. All these narratives set their actions, however ancient, in a

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[70] Though outdated in some respects, the classic study remains Francis M. Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus* (London, 1907).

[71] Rutherford, 'Tragedy and History'; and Saïd, 'Herodotus and Tragedy'. On historical and tragic plots, see John Marincola, *Greek Historians*: *Greece and Rome* (Oxford, 2001), 69–73.

[72] In this I strongly concur with Rutherford, 'Tragedy and History', 504, speaking of history and tragedy.

[73] Deborah Boedeker, 'Pedestrian Fatalities: The Prosaics of Death in Herodotus', in Peter Derow and Robert Parker (eds.), *Herodotus and His World* (Oxford, 2003), 17–36.

continuum that connects them in some way with their audience, even if this is only because people in the future will know about them (a point made explicit, for example, at *Il.* 6.357–8, Simonides fr. 11.23–5 W²).

This leads to the third feature: memorability. Narrators and genres that focus on the past justify their efforts and the importance of their work with different reasons. Epic, according to its heroes, offers the immortality of *kleos*, 'renown' (for example, *Il.* 9.413). According to its internal audiences, it provides information and entertainment—albeit sometimes with painful emotions (as at *Od.* 8.521–34). Herodotus presents his research, he says, in order to prevent great deeds from becoming *aklea*, 'without *kleos*', and also to show the *causes* of actions (Hdt., proem). For Thucydides, history is useful (*ôphelima*), even a 'possession for ever' (*ktêma es aiei*), because understanding past events will allow people to know what to expect when similar circumstances recur in the future (Thuc. 1.22.4).[74] These explicit explanations are important, of course. In addition and more subtly, as recalled by speakers in epic and history (and certainly within other poetic genres such as epinician and elegy), the past regularly serves as a repository of warnings, possible analogies, and inspiring examples. The circle repeats, but always the past is there, waiting to be interpreted.

Along with these (practical? self-serving? competitive?) reasons, the poets and historians we have considered sometimes seem to take pains to make the events they convey memorable, and meaningful, beyond their 'historical' context, and even beyond any warning they may offer to the present audience. Epic, tragedy, history all offer highly mimetic situations that provoke emotional responses. Think of Thucydides' description of the desperate speed of the Athenian trireme dispatched to rescind the previous day's death sentence on the Mytileneans (3.49), or Herodotus' account of the Phocians' surprise when, stationed above Thermopylae, they hear the crunching of oak leaves underfoot and discover that the Persians have reached the top of the rise (7.217–8). And who will forget the poignant meeting of Priam and Achilles over the corpse of Hektor (*Il.* 24.471–691)? Even as they develop the sequence of events in their respective plots, such scenes are significant in ways that transcend their narrative contexts. They are poetic, in Aristotle's sense, as well as historical.

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With the exception of the 'new Simonides', all the references here are to the bilingual editions of Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.). They are cited throughout according to the line or fragment numbers in the Loeb editions.

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[74] A topic explored in depth by Kurt Raaflaub, 'Ulterior Motives in Ancient Historiography: What Exactly, and Why?' in Lin Foxhall, Hans-Joachim Gehrke, and Nino Luraghi (eds.), *Intentionale Geschichte: Spinning Time* (Stuttgart, forthcoming).

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Chapter 7

The Rise of Greek Historiography and the Invention of Prose

Jonas Grethlein

The past figures prominently in many genres of archaic Greek poetry, but it was not until the second half of the fifth century BC that the genre of historiography emerged.[1] Unfortunately, most of the first historiographic works have been lost in the transmission process, and often it is even difficult, if not outright impossible, to find reliable dates for authors and their works.[2] However, two works from the second half of the fifth century have been fully preserved: Herodotus' narrative of encounters between East and West, which culminate in the Persian Wars, and Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War. Herodotus and Thucydides were so successful in establishing the new genre, and proved so influential in its further development, that it has become natural to view their works within the frame of historiography. Fruitful as it is to view Herodotus and Thucydides within the framework for which they laid the ground,[3] it is equally important to contextualize the rise of Greek historiography in the contemporary intellectual environment.[4]

One of the most striking cultural developments in fifth-century Greece was the 'invention' of prose. Of course, there was prose before, but the 'maîtres de vérité' in archaic Greece used poetry to present their insights.[5] With the

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[1] The translations are taken, with modifications, from *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, 1961); Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Steven Lattimore (Indianapolis, 1998); and Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford, 1998).

[2] On other prose historians besides Herodotus and Thucydides in the second half of the fifth century, see Robert L. Fowler, 'Herodotos and His Contemporaries', *Journal of Hellenistic Studies*, 116 (1996), 62–87; and Leone Porciani, *Prime forme della storiografia greca: Prospettiva locale e generale nella narrazione storica* (Stuttgart, 2001).

[3] See, for example, the standard work by John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge, 1997).

[4] For a new assessment of the rise of Greek historiography against the horizon of memory in poetry and oratory, see Jonas Grethlein, *The Greeks and their Past: Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth Century BCE* (Cambridge, 2010).

[5] See Marcel Detienne, *Les maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque* (Paris, 1967). Ewen L. Bowie, 'Lies, Fiction and Slander in Early Greek Poetry', in Christopher Gill and T. P. Wiseman (eds.), *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Austin, 1993), 1–37, suggests interesting distinctions between the claims to truth underlying various archaic genres.

exception of laws, authoritative expressions were made in verses until the fifth and fourth centuries when, together with a strengthening of literacy in a still predominantly oral society, prose genres emerged that presented new views of the world.[6] We are quick to give these texts labels such as science, oratory, historiography, and philosophy, but it ought not to be forgotten that Hippocrates, Gorgias, Herodotus, and Plato could not rely on fixed genres. While the boundaries of genres were still fluent, and while there are many similarities between texts that, for our understanding, belong to very different genres, authors took pains to define their own approaches by delimiting them from others.

The fluidity, openness, and competitiveness within the emerging field of prose genres makes it particularly important to view the rise of Greek historiography against the backdrop of contemporary intellectual developments, and to trace back the manifold interactions between the works of Herodotus and Thucydides on the one hand and the boom of rhetoric and science on the other. I will first touch upon the close relationship of historiography to scientific works and rhetoric in fifth-century Greece. While these influences on the rise of Greek historiography have been much discussed, the historians' attempt to define themselves against the use of the past in oratory has received less attention, and marks an interesting parallel to Plato's dialogues, which sheds new light on an interesting aspect of historiography's relationship to democracy.

TEKMERIA: HISTORIOGRAPHY, SCIENCE, AND RHETORIC

In many regards, the first Greek historians were heavily indebted to the Homeric epics.[7] The focus on a great war which we find in Herodotus' *Histories* and Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, as well as in many later historical works, is prefigured in the *Iliad* and, at the level of form, the historians' artful presentation of the past, including anachronies and different levels of focalization, successfully applies narrative devices familiar from the epics to more recent events. One of the most striking differences, however, from the epics, which aligns historiography with contemporaneous prose genres, is the establishment of narratorial authority.[8] The Muses who serve the epic narrator and many other poets so well are not invoked by the historians, who instead have to create credibility by proof and plausible narration.

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[6] See Simon Goldhill, *The Invention of Prose* (Oxford, 2002) on the 'invention of prose'.

[7] See, for example, Hermann Strasburger, *Homer und die Geschichtsschreibung* (Heidelberg, 1972); and, on epic narrative strategies, Antonios Rengakos, 'Homer and the Historians: The Influence of Epic Narrative Technique on Herodotus and Thucydides', in Franco Montanari and Rengakos (eds.), *La poésie épique grecque: Métamorphoses d'un genre littéraire* (Geneva, 2006), 183–209.

[8] Cf. Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography*, 3–12.

In the following I will explore a specific strategy for making one's account credible; the use of *tekmeria*. The term *tekmerion* derives from the verb *tekmairesthai*, the primary meaning of which is 'assign, ordain', and is related to the Homeric noun *tekmar* which signifies, besides 'fixed mark, boundary', also 'sure sign, token'. This is also the basic meaning of *tekmerion* which, however, in classical literature is used more and more as a *terminus technicus* for 'proof'. Scientists as well as orators, particularly in court speeches, adduce *tekmeria* to buttress their arguments. The use which Herodotus and Thucydides make of *tekmeria* nicely illustrates their intellectual background.

Let me begin with an example that illuminates Herodotus' engagement with the sophists: teachers who went from polis to polis and made their living by instructing the *jeunesse dorée* in all kinds of arts, and particularly in rhetoric.[9] The negative connotation which the term 'sophist' nowadays has goes back to Plato's merciless deconstruction of some radical sophists who advocated the relativity of norms and values. When Herodotus reports Cambyses' transgressions—for example, the burning of the statues of gods—he concludes that Cambyses had committed these crimes out of madness. Since each people regard their customs as the best, it must be a madman who would violate such basic rules of his own culture (3.38.2–4):

There is plenty of other evidence ($\tau \epsilon \kappa \mu \eta \rho \acute{\iota} o \iota \sigma \iota$) to support the idea that this opinion of one's own customs is universal, but here is one instance. During Darius' reign, he invited some Greeks who were present to a conference, and asked how much money it would take for them to be prepared to eat the corpses of their fathers; they replied that they would not do that for any amount of money. Next, Darius summoned some members of the Indian tribe known as Callatiae, who eat their parents, and asked them in the presence of the Greeks, with an interpreter present so that they could understand what was being said, how much money it would take for them to be willing to cremate their fathers' corpses; they cried out in horror and told him not to say such appalling things.

Herodotus closes his argument with a reference to Pindar's dictum 'custom is king of all'. The notion that the validity of *nomoi* differs from culture to culture is characteristic of the general relativism associated with the sophistic milieu.[10] More specifically, Herodotus' reflection is reminiscent of a passage in the *Dissoi logoi*—a sophistic treatise, in which the author suggests that if all men brought together what they deem to be 'shameful' ($\alpha \grave{\iota} \sigma \chi \rho \acute{o} s$), and then took from this

[9] For an introduction to the sophists in classical Greece, see G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge, 1981).

[10] Felix Heinimann, *Nomos und Physis: Herkunft und Bedeutung einer Antithese im griechischen Denken des 5. Jahrhunderts* (Basel, 1945), 80–81, suggests Protagorean influence. On Herodotus and the sophists in general see, for example, Rosalind Thomas, *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge, 2000), and Kurt Raaflaub, 'Philosophy, Science, Politics: Herodotus and the Intellectual Trends of his Time', in Egbert J. Bakker, Irene J. F. de Jong, and Hans van Wees (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden, 2002).

heap what they consider to be 'noble' (καλός), nothing would be left (90 DK 18, cf. 26). Herodotus shares with this fragment the insight into the relativity of values; however, this leads him to a rather different conclusion. The argument that he must be mad who violates basic laws of his own culture implies that the variety of laws across cultures does not challenge their validity within their respective culture. On the contrary, as the quote from Pindar suggests, the adherence of the peoples to their various laws forms itself something like a master-law.[11] In having a Persian and a Greek voice the general rule of law—Darius through his investigation, and Pindar through his gnome—Herodotus both considers and overcomes cultural relativism.[12] Instead of challenging traditional values, the insight into the relativity of norms is used to underscore their authority within their own culture.

Besides the content, the form of the argument, the use of a *tekmerion*, testifies to the intellectual world in which Herodotus was embedded. Not only does the elaborate presentation of proof illustrate the increasing influence of rhetoric in fifth-century Greece, but the ethnographic context of this *tekmerion* and the scientific contexts of others—as, for example, in the geological discussion of Egypt (2.13.1)—suggests a more specific parallel to the contemporary medical and scientific writers, in whose works *tekmeria* abound.[13] So when, for example, the author of *On the Nature of Man*, written at the end of the fifth century,[14] polemicizes against other writers, he complains that 'each adds to his account pieces of evidence (μαρτύρια) and proofs (τεκμήρια) which mean nothing' (1.2 J), only to announce regarding himself not much later: 'I will give proofs (τεκμήρια), and point out the necessary causes why everything grows and decreases in the body' (2.5 J).[15]

The use of *tekmeria* does not consequently testify to an empiricist position. As Rosalind Thomas observes, Herodotus' *tekmeria* only rarely establish actual empirical proof, but often involve complex inferences in controversial arguments.[16] The prominence of *tekmeria* therefore indicates not so much actual

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[11] Cf. Rosario Vignolo Munson, *Telling Wonders: Ethnographic and Political Discourse in the Work of Herodotus* (Ann Arbor, 2001), 169–70.

[12] However, the reference to Darius may have a twist. M. R. Christ, 'Herodotean Kings and Historical Inquiry', *Classical Antiquity*, 13 (1994), 187–9, argues that his authoritative style makes his inquiry rather problematic and that his claims sit uncomfortably with the Pindar quote 'custom is *king* of all'.

[13] The parallels between Herodotus and the Hippocratic writers have been elucidated by Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, who builds on an earlier paper by D. Lateiner, 'Early Greek Medical Writers and Herodotus', *Antichthon*, 22 (1986), 1–20. See also Raaflaub, 'Philosophy, Science, Politics'. For τεκμήριον and τεκμαίρεσθαι see besides 2.13.1: 1.57.1; 2; 2.33.2; 43.2; 58; 104.4; 3.38.2; 7.16γ2; 234.1; 238.2; and 9.100.2.

[14] J. Jouanna, *Hippocrate: La nature de l'homme* (Berlin, 1975), 59–61.

[15] For more examples, see Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, 195–8.

[16] Ibid., 190–200. See also P. Butti de Lima, *L'inchiesta e la prova: Immagine storiografica, pratica giuridica e retorica nella Grecia classica* (Torino, 1996), 134, who points out that *tekmerion* in Herodotus mostly signifies logical-argumentative proof and that it does not establish necessary conclusions (p. 141–2).

empiricism, as the need for a rhetoric of proof in an epideictic culture in which the doctors, as well as Herodotus, had to make their presentations as persuasive as possible in order to attract and convince their critical audiences.[17]

It would be problematic to argue that Herodotus was simply influenced by the medical writers, and it is more appropriate to view him as part of a larger intellectual movement with a unique voice.[18] His use of *tekmeria*, for example, is both similar to, and distinct from, the proofs which the contemporary scientists give. While many of the *tekmeria* in the medical writings serve arguments about the present, Herodotus frequently uses them for the reconstruction of the past. For instance, one of the characteristics that prompts Herodotus to assume that the Colchians have descended from the Egyptians is their use of circumcision which, other than these two peoples, only the Ethiopians have practised right from the beginning (2.104.4). The 'strong proof' ($\mu\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\alpha\ \tau\epsilon\kappa\mu\acute{\eta}\rho\iota\nu$) for Herodotus' conviction that the Colchians circumcise their children due to their origin from Egypt is the following: the Phoenicians seem to have learnt circumcision from the Egyptians, since those Phoenicians who no longer mingled with the Egyptians ceased to circumcise their boys. Therefore, Herodotus concludes, the Colchians must have taken over the practice from Egypt too. It is obvious that this argument combines debatable observations with even more questionable logical deductions.[19] At the same time, it is worth noting that the *tekmeria*, as well as the argument proved by them, are not general ethnographic reflections, but historical reconstructions.

In her comparison of Herodotus and Thucydides, Virginia Hunter notes the similarity of their methodological tools: 'Both historians employ inductive arguments characteristic of the late fifth century to produce a reconstruction of the past.'[20] However, unlike Herodotus, Thucydides only rarely infuses his narrative with comments on his investigation; instead, his account derives credibility from the impression that it unfolds itself in accordance with the events.[21] Nonetheless, in the beginning chapters, which outline the archaic history of Greece, and in his explicit methodological reflections, Thucydides presents himself as an author who, just like Herodotus, subjects his material to rigorous scrutiny. Here we find several occurrences of the term *tekmerion* and its cognates. Yet, while the Herodotean use of *tekmerion* signals a close affiliation with contemporary science and performance culture, I would argue that *tekmerion* has more of a juridical ring in Thucydides.

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[17] See also Mabel L. Lang, *Herodotean Narrative and Discourse* (Cambridge Mass., 1984) for an examination of oral features in Herodotus' narrative.

[18] Cf. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context.*   [19] Cf. ibid., 193–4.

[20] Virginia Hunter, *Past and Process in Herodotus and Thucydides* (Princeton, 1982), 93.

[21] Cf. David Gribble, 'Narrator Interventions in Thucydides', *Journal of Hellenistic Studies*, 118 (1998), 41–67 on narrator interventions in Thucydides; James V. Morrison, 'Preface to Thucydides: Rereading the Corcyrean Conflict (1.24–55)', *Classical Antiquity*, 18 (1999), 94–131 on the engagement of the reader; and Francis M. Dunn, *Present Shock in Late Fifth-Century Greece* (Ann Arbor, 2007), 111–50, on 'presentness' in the Thucydidean narrative.

At the very beginning of his *History*, Thucydides elaborates on his claim that the Peloponnesian War supersedes all previous wars (1.1.3):

While it was impossible, because of the amount of time elapsed, to discover clearly (σαφῶς ... εὑρεῖν) what happened in the previous era or the still more remote past, I believe—using the evidence I have come to trust (πιστεῦσαι) by investigating (ἐκ ... τεκμηρίων) as far back as possible—that these events were not on a large scale either regarding warfare or in other respects.

At the end of his reconstruction of the archaic history of Greece, Thucydides returns to his reflection on the difficulty in gathering reliable data (1.20.1–1.21.1):

Such, then, I found (ηὗρον) to be the nature of early events, although with difficulty in trusting (πιστεῦσαι) every piece of evidence (τεκμηρίωι). For men accept one another's accounts of the past, even about their native countries, generally without examination (ἀβασανίστως) ... In light of the evidence I have cited (ἐκ δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων τεκμηρίων), however, no one would go wrong in supposing that the early events I have related happened much in that way: not believing (πιστεύων) that the past was more like what the poets have sung, embellishing with their exaggerations, or like what the logographoi have composed more for attractive listening than for truthfulness, in versions that cannot be checked (ἀνεξέλεγκτα) and for the most part have forfeited credibility over time by winning victories as patriotic fiction, but regarding my discoveries from the clearest possible evidence (ηὑρῆσθαι ... ἐκ τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων σημείων) as adequate for what concerns antiquity.

Simon Hornblower has demonstrated that Thucydides does not use the term *tekmerion* with the technical meaning that it has in the rhetorical treatises of the fourth century,[22] but the passages quoted make clear that it has a legal ring. Besides *tekmerion*, the repeated use of εὑρίσκειν and πιστεύειν evokes the law courts where it was the speakers' primary concern to find evidence that would establish credibility.[23] The critique that the accounts of the *logographoi* 'cannot be checked' (ἀνεξέλεγκτα) implies the need for 'scrutiny' (ἔλεγχος) which plays an important role in forensic rhetoric. In addition, the adverb 'without examination' (ἀβασανίστως) alludes to the legal procedure of *basanos*: the torture to

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[22] Simon Hornblower, *Thucydides* (Baltimore, 1987), 100–7. Ar. *Rhet.* 1.2.14–18 defines *tekmeria* as more conclusive than *semeia*, and Antiphon *fr.* 72 Blass-Thalheim juxtaposes *tekmeria* as clues about the future with *semeia* as means to reconstruct the past. However, as M. J. Edwards and S. Usher point out in *Greek Orators*, vol. 1: *Antiphon & Lysias* (Warminster, 1985), 86 neither definition is valid in oratory.

[23] See Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft* (Munich, 1960), 190-91 on πίστις in the *argumentatio*. K. von Fritz, *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1967), i. 588, draws attention to differences between *tekmeria* in Thucydides and orators such as Antiphon. On εὑρίσκειν, see also L. L. Canfora, 'Trovare I fatti storici', *QS*, 13 (1981), 211–20, who argues that in Thucydides it has the special meaning of 'finding something that is great'.

which non-citizens could be subjected.[24] Thucydides' endeavour to give an accurate account of the past is cast in the mould of the forensic reconstruction of what exactly happened.

It is therefore not surprising that when Thucydides claims that 'it was difficult for me to recall (διαμνημονεύειν) the exact words (τὴν ἀκρίβειαν αὐτὴν τῶν λεχθέντων) regarding speeches I heard myself and for my informants about speeches made elsewhere' (1.22.1), we also find διαμνημονεύειν as terminus for the litigant's recollection of the past in one of Antiphon's speeches (5.54), and that 'the exact words' (ἀκρίβεια τῶν λεχθέντων) are reminiscent of the phrases 'the exact deeds' (ἀκρίβεια τῶν πραχθέντων) and 'the truth of my deeds' (ἀλήθεια τῶν ἐξ ἐμοῦ πραχθέντων) used by the same author (e.g. Ant. 4.3.1; 2.4.1).[25] Finally, the statement 'finding out the facts involved great effort, because eyewitnesses did not report the same specific events in the same way, but according to individual partisanship or ability to remember' (1.22.3) envisages the historian as a judge who has to evaluate contradictory accounts.[26]

This brief look at some of the occurrences of the word *tekmerion* in Herodotus and Thucydides gives us at least a glimpse of historiography's intellectual background and its close interaction with other developing prose genres. Herodotus' deployment of *tekmeria* illustrates the strong parallels between his *historie* and the inquiries of the medical doctors and physiologists of his day. Thucydides, who cautiously avoids calling his account a *historie*, taps into the rhetoric of the law courts with his *tekmeria*. My discussion is only exemplary and does not allow a strict juxtaposition of Herodotus' debts to science with the impact of legal procedures on Thucydides. P. Butti de Lima, for example, has made a case that Herodotus, as well as Thucydides, received inspiration from forensic practice.[27] Simultaneously, Thucydides' debts to the Hippocratic authors have

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[24] For the adjective ἀβασάνιστος, see Ant. 1.13. See also Thuc. 6.53.2, where βασανίζειν is used for a thorough investigation of the scandal of the Mysteries and the mutilation of the Herms.

[25] Cf. Antonis Tsakmakis 'Von der Rhetorik zur Geschichtschreibung: Das "Methodenkapitel" des Thukydides (1,22,1–3)', *RhM*, 141 (1998), 245. The list and discussion of passages with a legal ring could easily be extended; see, besides P. Siewert, 'Zur Wahrheitssuche bei Thukydides und vor attischen Gerichtshöfen des 5. Jh. v. Chr.', in E. Weber and G. Dobesch (eds.), *Römische Geschichte, Altertumskunde und Epigraphik: Festschrift für Arthur Betz* (Wien, 1985), 565–74, for example W. Robert Connor, *Thucydides* (Princeton, 1984), 27–8, who argues that ἐπεξῆλθον (1.22.2) not only has 'military overtones', but also evokes the prosecution in the law courts. Jürgen Gommel, *Rhetorisches Argumentieren bei Thukydides* (Hildesheim, 1966) devotes a (brief) monograph to Thucydides' deployment of the rhetorical arguments from probability. See also Emily Greenwood, *Thucydides and the Shaping of History* (London, 2006), 67–8 on τά δέοντα in Thucydides and its significance as rhetorical topos.

[26] For a comparison of the historian with a judge, see Lucian, *Hist. Conscr.* 40, and for a modern reflection on the similarities, see Carlo Ginzburg, *Il giudice e lo storico: Considerazioni in margine al processo Sofri* (Torino, 1991).

[27] Butti de Lima, *L'inchiesta e la prova.* See also Henry R. Immerwahr, 'Aspects of Historical Causation in Herodotus', *Transactions of and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 87 (1956), 241–80, 276. Siewert 'Zur Wahrheitssuche bei Thukydides und vor attischen Gerichtshöfen des 5. Jh. v. Chr.', 569, on the other hand, believes that the use of forensic techniques and terminology distinguishes Thucydides from Herodotus.

attracted much scholarly attention.[28] What the use of *tekmeria* reveals is that both authors feel obliged to examine their evidence carefully and, in the presentation of the material, draw on specific contemporary rhetorics in order to provide their narratives with authority. However, the interaction of the newly emerging prose genres has more facets. In the next section, I shall argue that the first historians, particularly Thucydides, also tried to define their new genre by delimiting it from rhetoric.

DEFINING HISTORIOGRAPHY AGAINST RHETORIC

According to traditional scholarship, the fourth century saw the emergence of 'rhetorical historiography'.[29] In particular, Theopompus and Ephorus, who are called students of Isocrates in some ancient sources, privileged rhetorical embellishment over historical accuracy. However, not only has the view that Theopompus and Ephorus actually were students of Isocrates been challenged,[30] but the strong rhetorical features of ancient historiography in general make the term 'rhetorical historiography' for a specific group of authors questionable.

The relationship between classical historiography and rhetoric has been illuminated by A. J. Woodman who forcefully argues that ancient historiography not only drew on rhetoric, but was itself considered as part of rhetoric.[31] The ancient historians, he tries to show, went beyond the artful rhetorical presentation of their findings and exerted the same freedom as the orators in the *inventio* of their material. Even Thucydides, not to mention Theopompus and his like, felt free to make up events for dramatic purposes. Woodman's thesis is heavily disputed,[32] understandably, for it questions the traditional view of ancient historiography as the foundation of modern historiography, and maps onto the challenge that Hayden White posed to the self-understanding of modern historians. It has become clear, however, that reflections on the nature of ancient historiography ought to give rhetoric a prominent place.

[28] See, for example, Charles Norris Cochrane, *Thucydides and the Science of History* (London, 1929); and Klaus Weidauer, *Thukydides und die hippokratischen Schriften* (Heidelberg, 1954). For a recent and more cautious assessment, see Thomas, 'Thucydides' Intellectual Milieu and the Plague', in Rengakos and Tsakmakis (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Thucydides* (Leiden, 2006), 87–108.

[29] See, for example, Klaus Meister, *Die griechische Geschichtsschreibung: Von den Anfängen bis zum Hellenismus* (Stuttgart, 1990), 108–9.

[30] Cf. Michael Flower, *Theopompus of Chios: History and Rhetoric in the Fourth Century BC* (Oxford, 1994), 42–62, whose scepticism can be traced back to E. Schwartz, 'Ephoros', in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 6.1 (1907), 1–2. Against this scepticism, see more recently Francis Pownall, *Lessons from the Past: The Moral Use of History in Fourth-Century Prose* (Ann Arbor, 2004), 27–9.

[31] Cf. A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography: Four Studies* (London: 1988).

[32] See, for example, John L. Moles, 'Truth and Untruth in Herodotus and Thucydides', in Christopher Gill and T. P. Wiseman (eds.), *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Austin, 1993), 211–12; and J. E. Lendon, 'Historians Without History: Against Roman Historiography', in Feldherr (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historians* (Cambridge, 2009), 41–61.

In this section I shall argue for an aspect of the relationship between historiography and rhetoric that has not received its due attention so far. Not only is the development of Greek historiography indebted to rhetoric, but the first historians also defined their own genre by setting it against rhetorical uses of the past. I will first discuss Thucydides, whose critique of oratory is explicit as well as implicit, and will then make a case that implicit attempts at such a delimitation can also be found in Herodotus.

Unlike Herodotus, Thucydides provides his readers with an explicit reflection on his method at the beginning of the *History.* Let me quote again the passage in which he criticizes poets and *logographoi* (1.21.1):

In light of the evidence I have cited, however, no one would go wrong in supposing that the early events I have related happened much in that way: not believing that the past was more like what the poets have sung, embellishing with their exaggerations, or like what the logographoi have composed more for attractive listening than for truthfulness, in versions that cannot be checked and for the most part have forfeited credibility over time by winning victories as patriotic fiction, but regarding my discoveries from the clearest possible evidence as adequate for what concerns antiquity.

While it is clear that the polemic against poets is levelled at Homer, and perhaps also at the composers of other poetic accounts of the past, such as Simonides' elegy on the battle of Plataea,[33] the identification of the *logographoi* has caused considerable headache. The traditional position, as put forward by Georg Friedrich Creuzer—namely, that *logographos* is a *terminus technicus* for the pre-Herodotean historians mentioned by Dionysius[34]—could not hold ground when Felix Jacoby questioned the existence of such historians.[35] Instead, it has won wide acceptance to translate *logographos* as 'prose-author', and to see a critique particularly of Herodotus.[36]

However, this meaning is a *petitio principii*, since there is not a single passage in classical literature which safely attests to the meaning 'prose-author' for *logographos.*[37] The conventional meaning is 'speech-writer' or 'orator'. This meaning makes good sense in our passage, since in deliberate speeches historical *exempla* figure prominently. More importantly, the Athenian funeral speeches, which in wartime were held annually in honour of the fallen, contained a lengthy account

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[33] Deborah Boedeker, 'Simonides on Plataea: Narrative Elegy, Mythodic History', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 107 (1995), 226–9.

[34] Georg Friedrich Creuzer, *Die historische Kunst der Griechen in ihrer Entstehung und Fortbildung* (2nd edn. Leipzig, 1845).

[35] Felix Jacoby, 'Herodotus', in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, Supplement-Band II* (Stuttgart, 1913), 205–520.

[36] See, however, Connor, *Thucydides*, 28; and Josiah Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens: Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule* (Princeton, 1998), 55, who include orators in the number of those criticized by Thucydides.

[37] Cf. Jonas Grethlein, 'Logographos und Thuc. 1.21.1', *Prometheus*, 30 (2004), 209–16.

of the city's history from its beginning to the present. Highly formalized and repeating the same catalogue of deeds over and over again, the *epitaphioi logoi* somehow offered the semi-official history of Athens. Thus, oratory was an important commemorative genre against which Thucydides had to define his new approach to the past.[38]

Moreover, the meaning 'orator' ties in well with the context. Thucydides reproaches the *logographoi* for telling stories that are *muthodes*, which means not so much 'romance' or 'fairy-tale' as 'flattering', as Stewart Flory shows.[39] Flory convincingly argues that *muthodes* in 1.21.1 signifies patriotic stories, but he does not see that it would make little sense to direct such blame against Herodotus who, after all, writes history from a Panhellenic perspective. In both epideictic and deliberative speeches, on the other hand, the past is tainted by a patriotic slant.

Thucydides' rejection of a 'competition piece to be heard for the moment' (ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν) could go against the recitations of historical works as transmitted for Herodotus. Yet, the criticism of *agonisma* may apply more generally to oratory. Speeches are often called *agones* ('contests') in classical literature, and we find this use even in the *History*.[40] Moreover, Thucydides criticizes the fact that the *logographoi* are 'attractive to listen to' (προσαγωγός). The same, and related, words describe the effect of speeches in several passages in Thucydides.[41]

Taken together, the lexical evidence and the context make it plausible that the orators, not earlier historians, are the main object of Thucydides' polemic. It is possible that he also subsumes Herodotus, who seems to have given oral presentations, into this group, but even in this case his critique is broader, and is levelled against rhetorical accounts of the past in general. Given that poetry and rhetoric were the prime places for the commemoration of the past, it makes good sense that in attempting to justify his new approach to the past, Thucydides set it against these genres. It is difficult to assess how many prose accounts of the past were being written at the end of the fifth century, but it is a fair guess that they had not yet reached enough relevance to compare to poetry and oratory.

My interpretation can be expanded by the thesis that Thucydides enhances his explicit reflection on oratory by a form of implicit criticism. Thucydides, as Herodotus and most later ancient historians, embeds speeches of the characters in his narrative. Scholars have concentrated on the question whether or not the speeches are authentic—they are surely not—and have explored the complex

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[38] On oratory as commemorative genre, see Grethlein, *The Greeks and their Past*, 105–44, with further literature.

[39] S. Flory, 'The Meaning of τὸ μὴ μυθῶδες (I.22.4) and the Usefulness of Thucydides' *History*', *CJ*, 85 (1990), 193–208.

[40] See LSJ s. v. III 4; Thuc. 3.38.3–4.

[41] Jonas Grethlein, 'Gefahren des λόγος: Thukydides' "Historien" und die Grabrede des Perikles', *Klio*, 87 (2005), 57 with n. 73.

correspondences of the speeches with the authorial narrative.[42] I would like to suggest yet another approach: namely, that some speeches are integrated in the *History* as a foil for it. The example that I shall discuss here is the famous *epitaphios logos* of Pericles.[43] Some scholars have read the speech as a nostalgic praise of classical Athens; others have focused on its place in the narrative and have emphasized the tension between the ideal Athens and the polis that was shaken by the war and the plague.[44] In addition, the funeral oration figures in the *History* as an alternative commemorative medium that throws into relief the superiority of Thucydides' new approach to the past.

That the function of the Periclean *epitaphios logos* goes beyond giving the account of a particular speech is suggested by the lengthy introduction in which Thucydides describes the burial of the fallen soldiers on the Kerameikos and the institution of the funeral speech in general (2.34). The speech contains striking echoes of Thucydides' own methodological reflections. For example, Pericles remarks that the Athenians require 'no Homer to sing our praises nor any other whose verses will charm ($\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\psi\epsilon\iota$) for the moment ($\tau\grave{o}$ $a\grave{v}\tau\acute{\iota}\kappa a$) and whose claims the factual truth will destroy' (2.41.4). This echoes Thucydides' criticism of poets (1.21.1) and verbally recalls the reflection in 1.22.4: 'And the results, by avoiding patriotic storytelling, will perhaps seem the less enjoyable ($\dot{a}\tau\epsilon\rho\pi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho o\nu$) for listening . . . it is a possession for all time, not a competition piece to be heard for the moment ($\dot{\epsilon}s$ $\tau\grave{o}$ $\pi a\rho a\chi\rho\hat{\eta}\mu a$) that has been composed'.

Like Thucydides, Pericles blames the poets for not caring about the truth and, in contrast, claims to offer a truthful account himself (2.41.2; 1.20.3; 1.21.1). The immortal glory that Pericles bestows onto the fallen (2.43.2) corresponds to Thucydides' 'possession for all time' ($\kappa\tau\hat{\eta}\mu a$ $\dot{\epsilon}s$ $a\grave{\iota}\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ [1.22.4]). There are further comments that resemble Thucydides' reflections and thereby establish a similarity between the funeral speech and the *History*,[45] but more striking are passages

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[42] On the authenticity of the embedded speeches in Thucydides, see e.g. Hornblower, *Thucydides*, 45–72; on correspondences between authorial narrative and character speech, see, for example, Jacqueline de Romilly, *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide* (Paris, 1956). On speeches in ancient historiography in general, see John Marincola, 'Speeches in Classical Historiography', in id. (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (London, 2007), 118–32.

[43] For a more detailed interpretation, see Grethlein, 'Gefahren des $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma o s$'.

[44] For readings of Pericles' funeral speech as nostalgic praise of Athens, cf. G. P. Landmann, 'Das Lob Athens in der Grabrede des Perikles (Thukydides II 34–41)', *Museum Helveticum*, 31 (1974), 65–95; the literature in Konrad Gaiser, *Das Staatsmodell des Thukydides: Zur Rede des Perikles für die Gefallenen* (Heidelberg, 1975), 19; and Loraux, *The Invention of Athens*. On the other hand, Hellmut Flashar, *Der Epitaphios des Perikles: Seine Funktion im Geschichtswerk des Thukydides* (Heidelberg, 1969), besides elaborating on the tensions between Athens in the funeral speech and the *History*'s narrative, elucidates numerous tensions within the speech itself. See also Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*, 83–9, on the subversive tendencies of the speech. C. M. J. Sicking, 'The General Purport of Pericles' Funeral Oration and Last Speech', *Hermes*, 123 (1995), 404–25, and A. B. Bosworth, 'The Historical Context of Thucydides' Funeral Oration', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 120 (2000), 1–16 try to interpret the speech in its historical context.

[45] See Grethlein, 'Gefahren des $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma o s$', 43–6.

that mark crucial differences. To start with, Pericles refers to his speech as 'praise' (ὑμνεῖν [2.42.2]): 'For it is their virtues, and those of men like them, that have adorned the qualities I have praised (ὕμνησα) in the city.'

As we have seen, in his criticism of the poets, Thucydides blames the poets for their praise, using the same word for it (ὑμνεῖν [1.21.1]). Moreover, Pericles first reprimands 'any other whose verses will charm (τέρψει) for the moment' (2.41.4), but later implies that his speech also conveys *terpsis* (2.44.4). Thus, on the one hand, Pericles' criticism of the poets evokes Thucydides' methodical reflections; on the other, he describes his own speech in the same terms that Thucydides uses to question poetic and rhetorical accounts of the past. In trying to provide pleasure, Pericles does what is appropriate for the genre in which he performs, but falls short of the standards set up by Thucydides. As it turns out, the echoes call the readers' attention to profound differences between the *History* and the funeral speeches.

The fundamental difference is pointed out by Pericles himself. Before he sets out to deliver his speech he presents a critical view of *epitaphioi logoi*. He is worried about the necessity, inherent in this genre, of fulfilling the audience's expectations (2.35). This concern, which has been strangely neglected by scholars, reveals a major difference between speeches and the *History*, and presents the key to their juxtaposition: the funeral speeches are oriented toward the listeners' expectations; Thucydides, on the other hand, claims that the gauge for his account is the truth (1.20.3; 1.21.1). This difference is linked to the media of presentation. Thucydides repeatedly emphasizes the written form, which takes the *History* beyond the specific situation and context that shape the oral perform-ances of the orators. Seen from this perspective, Thucydides' hope that he has produced a *ktema es aiei* not only perpetuates the epic claim to eternity, but also implies the usefulness of Thucydides' account in many different situations. While speeches are composed for a specific situation, the *History* claims to be a possession with relevance for any time.[46]

The juxtaposition of the *History* with rhetorical uses of the past also illumi-nates the political relevance of Thucydides' methodological rigour. In 2.65,

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[46] John L. Moles, 'A False Dilemma: Thucydides' History and Historicism', in S. J. Harrison (ed.), *Texts, Ideas, and the Classics: Scholarship, Theory, and Classical Literature* (Oxford, 2001), 206–7 points out that κτῆμα ἐς αἰεί harks back to 1.21.2: τὸν παρόντα αἰεί and 1.22.1: τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων. If we do not follow Moles' argument ('Truth and Untruth in Herodotus and Thucy-dides', 105 with n. 19) that 1.22.1, τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων means 'the always present things', these echoes support the distributive interpretation of κτῆμα ἐς αἰεί. On the role of writing for Thucydides see Nicole Loraux, 'Thucydide a écrit la Guerre du Péloponnèse', *Metis*, 1 (1986b), 139–161; Lowell Edmunds, 'Thucydides in the Act of Writing', in *Tradizione e Innovazione nella cultura Greca da Omero all' eta Ellenistica. Scritti in onore di Bruno Gentili*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1993), 831–52; and James V. Morrison, 'Memory, Time, and Writing: Oral and Literary Aspects of Thucydides' History', in C. J. Mackie (ed.), *Oral Performance and its Context* (Leiden, 2004), 95–116.

Thucydides points out that under Pericles' guidance Athens fared well, but that his successors brought ruin over it (2.65.8–10):[47]

The reason was that he [Pericles], influential through both reputation and judgement and notable for being most resistant to bribery, exercised free control over the people and was not led by them instead of leading them, because he did not speak to please in order to acquire power by improper means but, since he had this through his prestige, even contradicted them in their anger…Those who came later, in contrast, since they were more on an equal level with one another and each was striving to become first, even resorted to handing over affairs to the people's pleasure.

The very point that Thucydides implicitly criticizes with the Periclean funeral speech—the *rhetores*' inclination to blindly fulfil the expectations of their audiences—proves most detrimental in the history of Athens. The sober orientation towards the facts, as practised by Thucydides, on the other hand, would set politics on a solid foundation. For example, the digressions on the Sicilian archaeology and the tyrannicide reveal that the historical knowledge presented by Thucydides would have prevented Athens from great disasters. Only ignorance of the Sicilian past and present made the Athenians undertake the Sicilian expedition, and wrong beliefs about the tyrants created the explosive atmosphere of a witch-hunt in 415 BC, when the mutilation of Herm-statues by unknown men and a scandal linked to the Mysteries plunged Athens into a deep internal crisis.[48]

In summary, my reading suggests a meta-poetic or meta-historical function for Pericles' funeral speech. Through marked echoes the speech serves as a foil for Thucydides' own approach to the past. The deficiencies of epideictic rhetoric are underscored by the evocation of Thucydides' rigorous claims. Thucydides' account, on the other hand, is thrown into relief by the *epitaphios logos.* Thus, Pericles' funeral speech implicitly continues, and reinforces the explicit polemic against orators in the methodological reflections of the first book.

In Herodotus we find nothing that is similar to Thucydides' explicit polemic against rhetoric. As we have seen, Herodotus was even, to some degree, part of the culture of rhetorical display with which Thucydides found so much fault. Nonetheless, the case can be made that Herodotus also implicitly deconstructs the use of the past in speeches and thereby throws into relief the superiority of

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[47] On Thucydides' criticism of the rhetoric of Pericles' successors, see Harvey Yunis, *Taming Democracy: Models of Political Rhetoric in Classical Athens* (Ithaca, 1996), 87–116. See also Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*, 79–94.

[48] For the Sicilian expedition, see Thuc. 6.1.1 with H.-P. Stahl, *Thucydides: Man's Place in History* (Swansea, 2003), 8; Lisa Kallet, 'Thucydides' Workshop of History and Utility outside the Text', in Antonios Rengakos and Antonis Tsakmakis (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Thucydides* (Leiden, 2006), 335–68; for the digression on the tyrannicide, see Thuc. 6.60.1 with Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*, 105–6; and Lisa Kallet, *Money and the Corrosion of Power in Thucydides: The Sicilian Expedition and its Aftermath* (Berkeley, 2001), 31.

his approach to the past. My example will be the speech duel between the Tegeans and Athenians at Plataea.[49]

Before the battle of Plataea in 479 BC, the Tegeans and Athenians engaged in an argument over the battle formation. The Spartans, it is agreed, can choose a wing, but both the Athenians and the Tegeans lay claim to the other wing. Instead of simply reporting who asserts themselves over the others, Herodotus lets both parties deliver speeches. The Tegeans argue that they have always enjoyed a privileged position (9.26.2–7): when the Heracleidai tried to invade the Peloponnese, the Peloponnesians gathered at the Isthmos to defend their land. There, Hyllus suggested a duel between himself and the best of the Peloponnesians. Should he win, the Heracleidai would be allowed to settle in the area; should his opponent win, the Heracleidai would be barred from the Peloponnese for 100 years. The Tegeans' king, Echemus, killed Hyllus and thus prevented the Spartans from settling in the Peloponnese for the subsequent generations. Since that time, the Tegeans claim, they have enjoyed special honours. Echemus not only serves as evidence for the Tegeans' excellence, but also offers a parallel to the present situation. In their attempt to conquer Greece, the Persians resemble the Heracleidai who tried to invade the Peloponnese. As with the ancient Peloponnesians who faced the sons of Heracles, the present residents of the peninsula gather at the Isthmus and only hesitantly join the Athenian forces outside their own land.

In their reply to this speech (9.27), the Athenians conjure up an entire catalogue of achievements: they defended the rights of the Heracleidai, helped the Argives to bury their dead, fought off the Amazons, and outshone everyone at Troy. However, the Athenians add, these ancient events do not count for much: who was strong in the past can now be weak, and vice versa. They therefore refer to their victory at Marathon, a recent display of virtue. Nonetheless, the Athenians agree to fight in any position that the Spartans choose for them—a risk well taken, since the Spartans elect the Athenians to take the second wing.

At first glance the Athenians' devaluation of ancient deeds is a rhetorical strategy that throws their strongest point into relief: Marathon.[50] In fact, despite their criticism, the Athenians elaborate on a whole series of ancient achievements which take up the major part of the speech. At the same time, the Athenians' argument, even if only used as a rhetorical device, echoes the end of the *Histories*' proem (1.5.4): 'For most of those [cities] which were great once are small today; and those which used to be small were great in my own time. Knowing,

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[49] On this passage, see L. Solmsen 'Speeches in Herodotus' Account of the Battle of Plataea', *Classical Philology*, 39 (1944), 241–53; and Elena Pallantza, *Der Troische Krieg in der nachhomerischen Literatur bis zum 5. Jh. v. Chr.* (Wiesbaden, 2005), 167–8.

[50] Cf. Pallantza, *Der Troische Krieg in der nachhomerischen Literatur bis zum 5. Jh. v. Chr.*, 167–8.

therefore, that human prosperity never abides long in the same place, I shall pay attention to both alike.'

The resonance of this central narratorial statement gives the Athenians' point weight that goes beyond its rhetorical function within their speech, and draws the reader's attention to a general flaw of exemplary uses of the past—every exemplum presupposes that the present resembles the past.[51] Only in this case is the past able to serve as a legitimization for the present. This use of the past is widespread in speeches, in which parallels from the past are frequently invoked to buttress claims in the present. To give another example from Herodotus: when the Greek embassy asks the Sicilians for support in their fight against the Persians, and the Syracusan tyrant, Gelon, first demands the central command, and then at least the command over either army or navy, the Spartan envoy invokes Agamemnon (7.159), and the Athenian envoy mentions Menestheus (7.161.3) to buttress their own claims and to refute those of Gelon.[52]

The evocation of the proem invites the readers to compare such rhetorical uses of the past with the *History*. Herodotus obviously does not disapprove of juxtaposing the past with the present. As numerous scholars have shown, a dense net of prolepseis jolts the readers into their own time and prompts them to see the more recent conflicts between Greeks against the backdrop of the Persian Wars.[53] However, the assumption of regularity between past and present on which exempla rest does not square with the *Histories*' emphasis on contingency and change. Because of this difference, Herodotus' use of the past as a foil for the present tends to have a different function from rhetorical exampla. While orators refer to the past for legitimizing purposes, Herodotus uses it to shed critical light on the present.[54] In 8.3, for example, Herodotus points out that in the Persian Wars the Athenians relinquished their claims to the command over the fleet:

And they were right, because internal dissension is worse than a united war effort to the same degree that war is worse than peace. So it was appreciation of this fact that made the Athenians give way without making a fuss—but, as they later demonstrated, only for as long as they badly needed the rest of the Greeks. Once Xerxes' invasion had been repulsed and they were fighting for his territory rather than their own, they deprived the

[51] On Thucydides' and Herodotus' stance on the exemplary use of the past, see Jonas Grethlein, '"Historia Magistra Vitae" in Herodotus and Thucydides? The Exemplary Use of the Past and Ancient and Modern Temporalities', in A. Lianeri (ed.), *Ancient History and Western Historical Thought: The Construction of Classical Time(s)* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

[52] Cf. Jonas Grethlein, 'The Manifold Uses of the Epic Past: The Embassy Scene in Hdt. 7.153–63', *American Journal of Philology*, 127 (2006), 485–509.

[53] See, for example, Charles W. Fornara, *Herodotus: An Interpretative Essay* (Oxford, 1971); Kurt Raaflaub, 'Herodotus' Political Thought and the Meaning of History', *Arethusa*, 20 (1987), 221–48; P. A. Stadter, 'Herodotus and the Athenian Arche', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore de Pisa, classe di lettere e filosofia*, 22 (1992), 781–809; and John L. Moles, 'Herodotus and Athens', in Bakker *et al.* (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, 48–52.

[54] See Grethlein, 'The Manifold Uses of the Epic Past', 505.

Lacedaemonians of the leadership, using Pausanias' arrogant behaviour as a pretext. But all this happened later.

Here, the past is explicitly juxtaposed with more recent events. In many other cases, Herodotus implicitly contrasts Athens' role in the Persian Wars with its later hegemonical ambitions, and subtly indicates that Athens follows Persia in the cycle of the rise and fall of great empires. Contrary to the orators, Herodotus uses the past as a foil for a critical assessment of the present.

There is, I think, yet another side to Herodotus' implicit deconstruction of the rhetorical use of the past. As scholars have not failed to notice, the Athenians' speech contains central topoi of the *epitaphioi logoi*.[55] Assisting the Heracleidai, supporting the Argives, fighting against the Amazons, and the battle of Marathon are the core of the historical sections in funeral speeches. The change of the usual order gives prominence to the help for the Heracleidai which forms a direct response to Echemus' victory over the Heracles-son, Hyllus.[56] While it is true that 'praises of Athens must surely have been made before the formal introduction of a "funeral speech", and the sorts of praises used here by the Athenians are familiar from some parts of tragedy',[57] it is striking that the list of deeds follows the catalogue of the *epitaphioi logoi* so closely.

Moreover, the question arises as to how relevant individual exempla are for the Athenians' case. The Heracleidai story is directed toward countering the Tegeans' exemplum, and the attack of the Amazons may prefigure the Persian invasion,[58] but there is no particular reason why the support of the Argives should be mentioned. As with the Athenian support of the Heracleidai, this myth not only propagated another polis' obligation towards Athens, but helped to sell an aggressive foreign policy as selfless help.[59] Thus, it does not really fit into an argument made by Athenians who had no claim to hegemony as yet. Of course, the story of the Argives could be used merely to reflect Athenian grandeur, and I would not go so far as to call it anachronistic in the Athenians' argument, but

[55] For example, Eduard Meyer, *Forschungen zur Alten Geschichte*, vol. 2: *Zur Geschichte des 5. Jhs. v. Chr.* (Halle, 1899) 219–21; L. Solmsen, 'Speeches in Herodotus' Account of the Battle of Plataea', *Classical Philology*, 39 (1944), 249.

[56] Cf. E. Schulz, *Die Reden im Herodot* (Greifswald, 1933), 40; and Kierdorf, *Erlebnis und Darstellung der Perserkriege*, 98. Moreover, the reference to the Trojan War distinguishes the Athenian speech from the preserved *epitaphioi logoi*, only two of which mention the Trojan War, yet never as a part of the catalogue of deeds (Demosth. 60.1–11. and Hyper. 6.35–6). Cf. Gotteland, *Mythe et rhétorique*, 218. Kierdorf, *Erlebnis und Darstellung der Perserkriege*, 98–9, argues that the reference to the Trojan War is a relic from the propaganda before the Persian Wars.

[57] Michael A. Flower and John Marincola (eds.), *Herodotus: Histories Book IX* (Cambridge, 2002), ad 9.27.1–6.

[58] The parallel between the Amazons' invasion and the Persian attack is even marked: according to the Athenians' speech, the Amazons came from the river Thermidon (9.27.4), and later, the Persians are said to come from the same river (9.43.2).

[59] See Uwe Neumann, *Gegenwart und mythische Vergangenheit bei Euripides* (Stuttgart, 1995), 149–67.

one has the impression of a slight displacement, and this reinforces the reference to the tradition of funeral speeches.[60] All in all, there can be little doubt that the Athenians' speech would have reminded Herodotus' readers of the *epitaphios logos*.

Therefore, what at first seems no more than a rhetorical device has far-reaching consequences for defining the actual position of Herodotean historiography. It challenges not only the exemplary use of the past that is so prominent in deliberative speeches, but also affects the genre in which Athens was 'invented'.[61] The funeral speeches do not use the past to argue a specific point, but envisage Athenian history as a continuum of great deeds. The blurring of temporal borderlines in the eternity of Athens' grandeur appears, for example, in the use of 'those who lie buried here' (οἱ ἐνθάδε κείμενοι) and similar phrases in Lysias' funeral speech. While in some cases there is a clear reference to the Athenians who have just died in the Corinthian expedition (69, 75, 76), it is striking that, not only are the same terms applied to Athenian soldiers of other wars, including the Athenians who died in the Persian Wars (54) and in the big battles at the end of the fifth century (60), but that some references are ambiguous (1, 64), and seem to praise indiscriminately all past Athenians who have sacrificed themselves for their polis. The undetermined reference makes individual events and times merge into an eternity of virtuous conduct. It is against such a view of history that Herodotus pits his emphasis on changeability.

I tentatively suggest that Herodotus' deconstruction of the rhetorical use of the past has an additional twist that relies on prolepses and on the later significance of Plataea. In evoking the *epitaphioi logoi* and bearing the imprint of Athenian imperialism, the Athenians' catalogue of deeds brings in a later time when Athens had to justify its aggressive foreign policy. Moreover, the controversy between Athenians and Tegeans centres on terms such as *hegemonia* and *stasis*,[62] which gain a special force later in the fifth century. The controversy at Plataea thereby adumbrates the conflicts to come, and the term *othismos* ('thrusting, pushing'), which Herodotus uses for it, offers not only a metaphor, but also indicates that this verbal duel foreshadows martial encounters. In these later intra-Hellenic conflicts, Plataea was an important *lieu de mémoire*.[63] The Plataean Debate in Thucydides (3.53–67), for example, reveals that the heritage of Plataea was fiercely fought over. When, after years of fierce resistance against the Spartan siege, the Plataeans capitulate in 427, they try to escape execution by invoking the memory of their service to the fellow Greeks. Their enemies, the Thebans,

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[60] Cf. Kierdorf, *Erlebnis und Darstellung der Perserkriege*, 109.

[61] Loraux, *The Invention of Athens*.

[62] 9.26.4: τὸν Πελοποννησίων ἡγεμόνα; 26.5: ἡγεμονεύειν; 26.6: ἡγεμονεύειν; and 27.6: στασιάζειν.

[63] For a discussion of the reception of Plataea in antiquity, see now Michael Jung, *Marathon und Plataiai: Zwei Perserschlachten als 'lieux de mémoire' im antiken Griechenland* (Göttingen, 2006), 225–383 with further literature.

on the other hand, accuse them of *attikismos*, and thereby compare their support for Athens with the betrayal of Greece by those poleis which did not fight at Plataea. To place the deconstruction of the rhetorical use of the past in the context of an event that itself had become a central *topos* in contemporary rhetoric gives the implicit critique special significance for the readers.

To sum up, Herodotus does not explicitly criticize orators, and his language reveals the traces of public performance against which Thucydides polemicized; and yet some speeches have meta-historical significance and can be read as a critique of rhetorical uses of the past.[64] In my test case, the controversy at Plataea, the Athenians' rejection of old achievements may be only a rhetorical device, but the echo of the proem juxtaposes the self-promoting use of the past in speeches with Herodotus' account. Interestingly, this deconstruction of the rhetorical use of the past seems to be levelled not only at diplomatic speeches, but also at the *epitaphioi logoi*, one of which Thucydides has embedded in his narrative as a contrast foil. However, it is noteworthy that the two historians are concerned with different aspects. Herodotus contrasts his emphasis on contingency and change with rhetorical views of the past that rely on continuity and regularity. Thucydides, on the other hand, throws into relief his methodological rigour and his strict orientation to the facts through the orators' desire to please their audience. Rhetoric was not only an important influence on the rise of Greek historiography, but it was also a competitor in the field of newly arising prose genres against which the historians, in many regards, defined their new way of commemorating the past.

'GENRES IN DIALOGUE': HISTORIOGRAPHY AND PLATO

My argument that Herodotus and Thucydides take a critical stance toward rhetoric suggests a comparison of historiography with another prose genre that emerged only slightly later: the philosophical dialogue. Our scanty transmission makes it difficult to reconstruct the very beginning of the *Sokratikoi logoi*,[65] but the outstanding proponent of this genre, Plato, is the fiercest critic of rhetoric as practised in Athens. In particular, the *Gorgias* (probably written in the 480s) offers a merciless attack on rhetoric and its central role in politics. Accordingly, together with Thucydides, Plato is the major focus of a recent study in politics and rhetoric in classical Athens.[66] The author, Harvey Yunis, even argues that Plato directly engages with Thucydides' and *History*; and more specifically, he claims

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[64] On Herodotus' play with other genres, see Deborah Boedeker, 'Herodotus's Genre(s)', in Mary Depew and Dirk Obbink (eds.), *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, Society* (Cambridge, Mass. 2000), 97–114.

[65] For a reconstruction, see Diskin Clay, 'The Origins of the Socratic Dialogue', in Paul A. Vander Waerdt (ed.), *The Socratic Movement* (Ithaca, 1994), 23–47.

[66] Yunis, *Taming Democracy.*

that Socrates' critique of Pericles as a politician who abused his rhetorical skills addresses not so much the historical persona as the character in the *History*.[67] Seen from this perspective, Plato attacks the only *rhetor* besides Themistocles of whom Thucydides approves; therefore the philosopher's view of rhetoric seems rather distinct from the historian's. Although I am not convinced that Plato actually levels his critique at Thucydides' Pericles—Yunis' points seem to me to be too general to allow such a conclusion[68]—I find it important to be aware of crucial differences between Plato's and Thucydides' approaches to rhetoric. Whereas Plato's critique is ultimately embedded in a metaphysical theory, Thucydides looks rather pragmatically at the consequences of mass oratory in history.

At the same time, there is at least one crucial parallel: Thucydides, as we have seen, takes issue with the orators' tendency to gratify their audiences. It is their desire to fulfil the expectations of the masses that brought Athens down. In the same vein, one of Socrates' major points against rhetoric is that orators merely try to please their listeners. In the *Gorgias*, for example, Plato has Socrates define rhetoric as 'producing a kind of gratification and pleasure' (462c7) and call it 'flattery' (463b1).[69] The parallel between Thucydides and Plato is even more specific, since Thucydides has Pericles complain that the speaker of a funeral speech is forced to cater to his audience's expectations, and Plato has Socrates use the following words to describe the effects of an *epitaphios logos* on him (235a5–c6):

…they also praise us who are still alive, until I feel quite elevated by their laudations. I stand listening to their words, Menexenus, and become enchanted by them, and all in a moment I imagine myself to have become a greater and nobler and finer man than I was before…This consciousness of dignity lasts me more than three days, and not until the fourth or fifth day do I come to my senses and know where I am—in the meantime I have been living in the Islands of the Blessed. Such is the art of our rhetoricians, and in such manner does the sound of their words keep ringing in my ears.

The similarity between Thucydides and Plato extends even further, as both authors use the same form for their critique of the orators' desire to please. I have argued for a meta-historical significance of some speeches in the first historians; that is, that some speeches are embedded as alternative acts of memory that throw into relief the superiority of historiography. In *Genres in Dialogue*, Andrea Nightingale makes a very similar case for Plato. The dialogues contain other genres, the deconstruction of which helps Plato to define his new genre. For example,

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[67] Ibid., 136–53.
[68] Cf. Jacqueline de Romilly, *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism* (Oxford, 1963), 362–6, who argues against references to Thucydides' *Histories* in Plato.
[69] Cf. Yunis, *Taming Democracy*, 132. Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton, 1989), 321–3 points out that orators frequently accuse one another of flattery.

Nightingale shows that in the *Symposium*, written perhaps at the end of the 480s, Plato juxtaposes encomiastic with philosophical discourse through the integration and critique of encomia.[70] Plato's *Menexenus*, which seems to have been composed in the same period, supplies an even more striking parallel to Thucydides' *History*, since both texts play with specimens of the same genre: the *epitaphios logos.* Herodotus and Thucydides faced the same challenge as did Plato; namely to shape, define, and sell a new genre in the increasingly crowded landscape of prose genres. They all delimited their new approaches against the omnipresent rhetoric by embedding samples of it as foils in their own works.

Let me finally suggest that this parallel may also illuminate the relationship of historiography with democracy. Recent critics have forcefully tried to complement, or even replace, the traditional image of Plato as uncompromisingly hostile towards democracy, with the thesis that he is heavily indebted to the values of democratic Athens.[71] Although such an approach risks marginalizing Plato's metaphysical foundationalism and the brutal dissection of democracy that has earned him his prominent place among the 'enemies of the open society',[72] it is hard to deny that the particular form of the dialogue firmly embeds Plato in the discursive world of Attic democracy. Besides the integration of other genres, which sits uneasily with a totalitarian agenda, 'the discourse among the Platonic characters relies on democratic principles of engagement, equality, and communal decision making'.[73] One might object that Socrates is an authoritative figure, but Socrates is not always right, and many dialogues end on an aporetic note. While Plato explicitly criticizes democracy, his critique uses a discursive form that is congenial to democracy.

I think that a similar tension can be noted for the rise of Greek historiography. It is difficult to pin down the political position of the first historians, but Thucydides figures prominently in Josiah Ober's club of 'political dissidents in democratic Athens'[74] and, as recent studies have shown, Herodotus was very

[70] Andrea Wilson Nightingale, *Genres in Dialogue: Plato and the Construct of Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1995), 110–32.

[71] Gregory Vlastos, 'The Historical Socrates and Athenian Democracy', *Political Theory*, 11 (1983), 495–516; and *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca, 1990) argues that Socrates is more or less a good democrat. For democratic features of Plato see, with different nuances and emphasis, Arlene W. Saxonhouse, *Athenian Democracy: Modern Mythmakers and Ancient Theories* (Notre Dame, 1996), 87–114; Peter J. Euben, 'Reading Democracy: "Socratic" Dialogues and the Political Education of Democratic Citizens', in Josiah Ober and Charles Hedrick (eds.), *Dēmokratia: A Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern* (Princeton, 1996), 327–60; Sara S. Monoson, *Plato's Democratic Entanglements: Athenian Politics and the Practice of Philosophy* (Princeton, 2000); and John R. Wallach, *The Platonic Political Art: A Study of Critical Reason and Democracy* (University Park, 2001).

[72] See, for example, Benjamin R. Barber's critique of Euben's take in Barber, 'Misreading Democracy: Peter Euben and the *Gorgias*', in Ober and Hedrick (eds.), *Dēmokratia* (1996), 361–76.

[73] Saxonhouse, *Athenian Democracy*, 101–2.

[74] Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens*, 52–121. See also Kurt Raaflaub, 'Thucydides on Democracy and Oligarchy', in Rengakos and Tsakmakis (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Thucydides*, 189–224.

much concerned with Athenian imperialism, which for contemporaries was inextricably linked to democracy.[75] Moreover, Frances Pownall has made a case that historians of the fourth century, including Xenophon, Theopompus, and Ephorus, 'form part of the literary resistance to Athenian democratic ideology'.[76]

At the same time, the historical narratives of Herodotus and Thucydides are polyphonous. In addition to the integration of other genres, it may be pointed out that Herodotus often presents different versions, sometimes without giving a preference. Thucydides' narrative is much more linear, but one of its most typical devices is the pairing of speeches. Without the help of much narratorial guidance, the readers must compare the divergent positions in the text. Are the Plataeans or the Thebans right? Diodotus gets the better of Cleon, but are his arguments really superior? Comparable to democratic procedures, *Histories* and *History* frequently present evidence without obvious evaluations; instead, like the citizens in the assembly and the courtroom, the readers have to make their own judgements.[77] Moreover, as Karl Reinhardts term 'symptomatische Geschichts-schreibung' describes so well, many important insights are not pointed out explicitly, but, just as in Platonic dialogues, must be constructed and concluded by the readers themselves. Thus, the critical view of democracy is presented in a narrative form that fits well with principles and procedures of democracy.

The Greek historians in general, and Thucydides and Herodotus in particular, are often viewed as the 'founders of modern historiography'.[78] While it is fruitful to compare ancient with modern historiography, it is also important to see how firmly embedded the rise of Greek historiography is in the world of the fifth century. The formation of Greek historiography as a genre took place in a discursive world and paralleled the development of other prose genres, partly sharing features with oratory and science, and partly defining itself in opposition to them.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

500–494 BC	Ionian Revolution
490 BC	Battle at Marathon
480 BC	Battle at Salamis
479 BC	Battles at Plataea and Mycale

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[75] See the works quoted above and also Hermann Strasburger, 'Herodot und das perikleische Athen', in Walter Schmitthenner and Renate Zoepfel (eds.), *Studien zur alten Geschichte*, vol. 2 (Hildesheim, 1982), 592–626, who emphasizes Herodotus' critical view of Athens.

[76] Pownall, *Lessons From the Past*, 4.

[77] On the engagement of the reader in Thucydides, see Connor, *Thucydides*; and Morrison, 'Preface to Thucydides'.

[78] For example Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley, 1990).

431–404 BC   Peloponnesian War
399 BC   Execution of Socrates
387 BC   Foundation of Academy by Plato

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Chapter 8

Hellenistic Historiography

John Dillery

It is perhaps alarming to modern students of historical writing, for whom Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius are not only pioneering figures, but also historians who rank as among the very best in the Western tradition, that most historiography from antiquity was not like the work of these giants. One can sense the truth of this observation from the texts of the great historians themselves and the objections they make regarding others who practise the craft of recalling the past. Herodotus knows that his assertion that the Athenians were (among human agents) the ones chiefly responsible for ultimate Greek victory in the Persian wars will be not just controversial, but in fact 'abominated (*epiphthonon*) by the majority of men' (Hdt. 7.139.1).[1] Similarly, Thucydides can comment acidly that the Athenian public does not know accurately the history of the Pisistratid tyranny in their own city: 'neither the rest of the Greeks nor the Athenians relate anything accurate (*ouden akribes*) about their own tyrants or about what happened' (Thuc. 6.54.1; cf. 1.20.2).[2] As for Polybius, his sustained criticism of much historical writing that preceded him makes it amply clear that with his own account of the past he meant, in F. W. Walbank's words, 'to assert his own view of what history should be against the sort of history which was widely written and read in the Hellenistic Age'.[3] Although perhaps an unfair generalization, still one feels that when we turn to Hellenistic historiography, much of it seems representative precisely of views about the past that were much more common than those of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius. But having said that, it is important not to assume that Hellenistic historical writing, from the mid fourth century BC down to the time of Polybius (mid second century), was uniform. Several distinct subgenres can be made out: political military history, following the tradition established by Thucydides (often styled *Hellenica*, or 'Hellenic Affairs'); histories of Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic kings;

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[1] Cf. for example, Donald Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto, 1989), 95–6.

[2] Elizabeth A. Meyer, 'Thucydides on Harmodius and Aristogeiton, Tyranny, and History', *Classical Quarterly*, 58 (2008), 13–34.

[3] F. W. Walbank, *Polybius* (Berkeley, 1972), 34.

histories of the entire inhabited world (*oikoumene*) or universal history; histories of specific regions and localities in the Greek world ('local history'); and, relatedly, histories of non-Greek lands written in the Greek language by native priest-historians.[4] These descriptions owe much to the views of the greatest student of Greek historiography of the modern era, Felix Jacoby, whose collection, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (abbreviated *FGrH*), is fundamental. In a magisterial article from 1909 on the development of Greek historiography, Jacoby explained the organization of his collection of the fragments,[5] but in so doing, created an organic and evolutionary model that does not adequately represent the pluriform nature of Greek historical writing at virtually all periods of antiquity—from its inception as a literary form all the way to the end of the ancient world.[6] I hope I may be permitted to use Jacoby's categories of Greek historiography, while at the same time still finding places where these categories overlap and part, or where they must be dispensed with altogether.

THE PROBLEM OF TERMINOLOGY: FRAMING THE ISSUES

But before we can examine Hellenistic historical writing in detail, we have to wrestle with the term 'Hellenistic', and work out also some of the implications that go along with both the periodization and evaluation implied in the use of this term. The concept of a Hellenistic Age was first formulated by Johann Gustav Droysen in 1836. He coined the term *Hellenismus* to help him explain the fusion of Greek and 'Oriental' cultures he assumed took place in the period between the conquests of Alexander (d. 323 BC) and the Battle of Actium (31 BC), which not only guaranteed the launch of Augustus' (then Octavian) imperial rule of Rome, but also brought about the end of the last surviving kingdom set up by the immediate successors of Alexander. Although Droysen's purpose behind the term was ultimately to explain the rise of Christianity out of Hellenized Judaism, it very quickly came to signify a period of cultural decline for the Greek world from its presumed heyday in the Athenian dominated 'Classical Age'.[7]

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[4] Cf. John Marincola, *Greek Historians* (Oxford, 2001) 105–12, a masterful and succinct review of Hellenistic historiography.

[5] Felix Jacoby, 'Über die Entwicklung der griechischen Geschichtsschreibung und den Plan einer neuen Sammlung der griechischen Historikerfragmente', *Klio*, 9 (1909), 80–123.

[6] For criticism of Jacoby's view of the development of Greek historiography see esp. S. C. Humphreys, 'Fragments, Fetishes, and Philosophies: Towards a History of Greek Historiography after Thucydides', in Glenn W. Most (ed.), *Collecting Fragments/Fragment sammeln* (Göttingen, 1997); and John Marincola, 'Genre, Convention and Innovation in Greco-Roman Historiography', in Christina Shuttleworth Kraus (ed.), *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts* (Leiden, 1999), 281–324.

[7] Arnaldo Momigliano, 'J. G. Droysen between Greeks and Jews', *History and Theory*, 9 (1970), 139–53; and Paul Cartledge, 'Introduction', in Paul Cartledge, Peter Garnsey, and Erich Gruen (eds.), *Hellenistic Constructs: Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography* (Berkeley, 1997), 2–3.

Hence, whatever noun is modified by 'Hellenistic'—be it 'art', 'literature', 'philosophy', or 'historiography'—has often been perceived as inferior to its Classical predecessor in some way. An observation by the late Sir Moses Finley sums up nicely the general attitude towards Hellenistic historical writing, which he understands as all Greek historiography after Thucydides: 'The surviving histories after Thucydides number less than a dozen, but we know the names of nearly a thousand writers of history, of one sort or another, and all the evidence leaves no doubt that not one of them approached Thucydides in intellectual rigour or insight.'[8] For Finley, then, there was so much historical writing after Thucydides, now in an admittedly fragmentary state, but for all that not really worth our attention anyway. Obviously it is crucial to be on guard against a number of assumptions that travel with the concept 'Hellenistic historiography': that it is inferior to what came before, but also that it is in some essential way different from earlier Greek historical writing. Indeed, that by virtue of not being either Herodotus or Thucydides, it is a recognizable entity in its own right—a grouping of historians united by common themes and methods. In what follows we shall have reason to question all of these assumptions.

A central difficulty in the study of Greek historical writing from Greek antiquity is that the figures we have identified as the most important, namely Herodotus and Thucydides, were also among the very first, and their works, together with that of Xenophon, are the only ones that have survived from antiquity intact. But how representative are the geniuses of any artistic or scholarly endeavour, and how can we tell, if virtually all the others engaged in the same pursuit have left corpora that are only fragmentary?

For that is the state of all Greek historical writing from the Hellenistic period, with the partial exception of Polybius; while major portions of his history of the Punic Wars have survived, a sizeable amount exists only in a Byzantine era paraphrase, and several books are completely missing.[9] In fact, it is thanks to Polybius, among others, that significant portions of some major Hellenistic historians have come down to us—notably Timaeus of Tauromenium, though his testimony is often hostile, and thus must be seen as somewhat compromised for that reason, just as Plato's is when it comes to the pre-Socratic philosophers.[10] And, I should add here, that while modern students of Polybius rate him among the very best of ancient historians, he was not reckoned one of the greats by readers in antiquity.[11] It is therefore perilous in the extreme to use the three greatest Greek historians to obtain a picture of Hellenistic historiography, either as possible models (in the case of Herodotus and Thucydides), or (in the case of Polybius)

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[8] Moses I. Finley, *The Greek Historians: The Essence of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius* (New York, 1959), 14.

[9] P. Derow, 'Polybius', *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (3rd edn, Oxford, 2003), 1210.

[10] Cf. Michael Attyah Flower, *Theopompus of Chios* (Oxford, 1994), 7.

[11] Arnaldo Momigliano, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Oxford, 1977), 71.

as sources for their work. But, as will be seen below, it is a danger we must at times take on.

The ugly truth is that modern students of the Hellenistic historians have to rely on other ancient writers for most of what we know about them and their work. Most, but not all. In some remarkable cases, finds of papyri from Graeco-Roman Egypt have brought to light spectacular additions to our knowledge of Hellenistic historiography: the remains of the so-called Oxyrhynchus Historian (the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*) are probably the most important in this connection.[12] Further, inscriptions from the period have made it possible to view the Hellenistic historian in public life and, in several cases, give us names of historians who would otherwise have been completely lost to us.[13]

HELLENICA: CONTINUATORS OF THUCYDIDES

In a late biography of Thucydides, the author, Marcellinus, comments on the end of the great historian's life: '[Thucydides] died after the Peloponnesian War in Thrace, while writing up the events of the twenty first year; the war lasted twenty seven years. The events of the remaining six years Theopompus fills out, and Xenophon, to the account of which Xenophon attaches his own Hellenic History' (Marcellinus 45 = *FGrH* 115 T 15).

But what did it mean to have completed Thucydides' history?[14] Marcellinus suggests that it was a matter of treating the years Thucydides did not get to. All three known continuators did more than this though. Both the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* and Theopompus took their histories down to the great defeat of the Spartan navy off the coast of Rhodes (394 BC), and Xenophon took his *Hellenica* down to 362 BC and the Theban victory at Mantinea that shattered Sparta's hegemony. Hence, apparently 'completing' Thucydides' history meant more than just completing his account of the Peloponnesian War. It is tempting to speculate that the continuators continued Thucydides, not just by completing his work, but also by following certain historiographic principles formulated by Thucydides.

But even with this more generous understanding of what it might have meant to have completed Thucydides' history, we still face a problem: Theopompus' work does not seem very 'Thucydidean' at all, and Xenophon's only partially so.

[12] Most recent edition: Mortimer Chambers, *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (Stuttgart/Leipzig, 1993). Called 'Oxyrhynchus Historian' because we do not know who the author is; he is also often referred to as 'P' for 'p[apyrus]'.

[13] Note esp. the excellent volume by Angelos Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften* (Stuttgart, 1988).

[14] Cf. Roberto Nicolai, 'Thucydides Continued', in Antonios Rengakos and Antonis Tsamakis (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Thucydides* (Leiden/Boston, 2006), 693–719.

Indeed, Xenophon's *Hellenica* seems to undergo an historiographic development of sorts.[15] In particular, Thucydides' innovative structuring of time and (therefore) narrative by campaigning season, so emblematic of his historical method (note Thuc. 2.1.1, 5.26.1), is observed, if quite imperfectly, by Xenophon through his account of the last years of the Peloponnesian War, and even sporadically beyond.[16] The *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* seems similarly organized (*Hell. Oxy.* 12.1, 19.1, 25.4 Chambers). It needs to be pointed out that neither Xenophon, nor the author of *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia*, seems to give regular totals of years that have passed, but insofar as they were dealing with several discrete sets of events and not a single war (see below), this is perhaps to be expected. For the vast majority of the later narrative of Xenophon's *Hellenica*, the chronological notices are absent. What is more, one senses a deliberate move away from the principles of Thucydides. Nowhere is this development clearer than at the start of Book 5. Having treated at some length the warm send-off by his solders of the Spartan commander, Teleutias, to home from Asia, Xenophon comments:

I know that in these matters I treat neither expenditure nor risk, nor any strategic thinking worthy of record. But by Zeus this seems to me to be worthy for a man to note, namely, whatever did Teleutias do to so dispose the men under his command. Now this accomplishment of a man is far more worthy of record than a great deal both of money and dangers.   (Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.4)

What is so striking about this passage is its deployment of key historiographic terms: *axiologotaton ergon* ('deed' or 'accomplishment' most worthy of record) is particularly noteworthy, recalling the legacy of both Herodotus (for example, his Proem) and Thucydides (note esp. his Proem too: the Peloponnesian War the 'most worthy of record' of those that had taken place). Striking also is the clustering of other *axion*-words: Xenophon is acutely aware of the problem of recording what is 'worthy' to be remembered—what, that is, is the proper focus of historical writing (cf. Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.56). For him it is not abstract but very personal: the example of Teleutias is the achievement of 'a man', to be noted by 'a man'.[17] This editorial aside has been seen as an attempt by Xenophon to justify a realignment of the suitable topics of historical writing, away from those taken to define Thucydidean historiography, and towards a new vision that would focus on moral examples from the past—especially those that demonstrated good leadership.[18] There is certainly a great deal of truth to this observation, but it also raises certain questions: does Thucydides have no exempla, and is

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[15] Cf. Hans Rudolf Breitenbach, *Historiographische Anschauungsformen Xenophons* (Basel, 1950); and P. J. Rahn, 'Xenophon's Developing Historiography', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 102 (1971), 497–508.

[16] P. Krentz, *Xenophon Hellenika I–II.3.10.* (Warminster, 1989), 109–10.

[17] Cf. Breitenbach, *Historiographische Anschauungsformen Xenophons*, 47 and n. 45.

[18] Thus, for example, ibid., 47–60; and Rahn, 'Xenophon's Developing Historiography', 499–501. Note also Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.32: the Athenian commander Iphicrates.

Xenophon's narrative devoid of 'expenditure' and 'risk' in the parts of the *Hellenica* that go beyond the end of the Peloponnesian War? The answer to all of these questions is: No. But, with that said, one does sense that historical writing definitely changed between Thucydides and Xenophon, and that with the latter, with his sporadic, yet for all that, his intense interest in moral evaluation and paradigms, we are presented with a foretaste of issues that will be prominent in later Greek historiography.

Indeed it could be argued that if Xenophon and Theopompus were following some presumed set of historiographic principles set down by Thucydides, these rules were followed more in their breach than their observance.[19] In this regard, Polybius makes a very telling remark about Theopompus:

No one would approve of [Theopompus] regarding the large-scale divisions [of his work]. Indeed, having set out to write up Hellenic affairs from the point where Thucydides left off, and having drawn near the battle of Leuctra and the most notable deeds of Greek history, in the middle of things he threw Greece aside and its enterprises, changed his plan, and chose to write up the affairs of Philip.   (Plb. 8.11.3 = *FGrH* 115 T 19).

Jacoby placed great importance on this passage. He understood it as a kind of watershed, marking as it were a fundamental shift in Greek historiography, away from historical writing conceived in the world of the free polis, and with the polis as its subject, and towards history centred on kings or other strongmen, written in a world dominated by their patronage.[20] Walbank further noted that Polybius had his own very particular reasons for criticizing Theopompus in the manner he did: animated by local pride, Polybius takes Theopompus to task because he altered the course of Greek historiography away from city-states and towards individual-centred histories just prior to the period when his own native land became politically and militarily important.

Polybius' criticism of Theopompus and Xenophon's implicit rejection of 'Thucydidean' historiographic principles create the impression that the historical writing of the late fifth and first half of the fourth century was dominated by the legacy of Thucydides, and this just simply is not the case. It is true that Xenophon's own debt to Thucydides was obviously profound, but he moved away from him in his long career as a writer and historian. Polybius, for his part, viewed the early years of Greek historiography from a considerable distance, and had a vested interest in presenting himself as a more faithful adherent to Thucydides' principles than men like Theopompus, who (in his understanding) radically reshaped the proper rules for historical writing. For this purpose he needed

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[19] Guido Schepens, 'History and *Historia*: Inquiry in the Greek Historians', in John Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2007), i. 48; and id., 'Tucidide "in controluce": La Guerra del Peloponneso nella storiografia greca del quarto secolo a.C.', in L. Santi Amantini (ed.), *Il dopoguerra nel mondo Greco: Politica, Propaganda, Storiografia* (Rome, 2007), 57–99.

[20] Jacoby, *FGrH, Komm.* II B 543–4.

to imagine a period when Thucydides' views held sway, and which were then ignored or abandoned. But it remains the case that Thucydides was not, in fact, a major influence on subsequent Greek historiography, and his importance to us has tended to obscure the fact that historical writing of a very different sort had been practised in the Greek world for some time, in particular so-called local history. But before turning to this important branch of Greek historiography as it was practised in the Hellenistic period, it is necessary to follow up on Polybius' observation regarding Theopompus' shift from polis-centred history to histories built around individuals.

ALEXANDER HISTORY, ROYAL HISTORY

It is important to note how continuity marks Greek historical writing in the Hellenistic period, as well as rupture. History built around individuals can be seen already in Herodotus. He famously begins his own explanation for the conflict of East and West by stating his plan to 'indicate who I myself know to have begun unjust deeds against the Greeks' (Hdt. 1.5.3), by which he means Croesus, king of Lydia, whose affairs take up much of the action of the first half of his first book. It could be argued that Herodotus' *Histories* is precisely built around the succession of Achaemenid kings of Persia, with each king taking us closer to the momentous events of 480/479, and each showing why Xerxes' invasion of Greece will fail: this is certainly the view Herodotus gives us in the voice of Xerxes' uncle, Artabanus, at the start of Book 7 (Hdt. 7.18.2).[21] Or, in the case of Thucydides, it could be argued that the Athenians' ultimate failure in the Peloponnesian War can be charted by considering the various Athenian statesmen he privileges in his narrative, beginning with Pericles, who functions as a sort of model against whom subsequent leaders can be measured. Indeed, so much is implied by Thucydides himself in his famous obituary of Pericles (note esp. Thuc. 2.65.10), even if in substance the views he expresses there are inaccurate.[22] In other words, individuals were important in Greek historical writing before the fourth century BC. So what is the difference?

It is again useful to look at Xenophon and Theopompus. In 360, King Agesilaus of Sparta died while leading a mercenary army in Egypt. Some time shortly afterwards, Xenophon, who had known the king personally and had been his friend, wrote an encomiastic biography of him entitled *Agesilaus*. Although there is much in this text that one cannot consider historiographic in orientation, significant portions of the work reproduce virtually verbatim large stretches of

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[21] Cf. James Romm, 'Herodotus and the Natural World', in Carolyn Dewald and John Marincola (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus* (Cambridge, 2006), 188.

[22] Cf. Simon Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1991–2008), i. 340, 346.

Xenophon's *Hellenica*.[23] This congruence of narrative helps to underscore the point that, with Xenophon, we see not only the individual at the centre of the narrative but, with his biography of Agesilaus, the individual can be seen to define the entirety of a work. And herein is what I take to be the main difference between how Herodotus and Thucydides viewed the individual in their texts, and what was attempted later, beginning with Xenophon. While the earlier historians featured several individuals influencing events over the course of many years, for Xenophon, Agesilaus was *the only focus* of his biography. The king organized and united the period. Indeed, in the parallel sections of his *Hellenica*, the argument could be made that Sparta's demise as the leading power of the Greek world can be charted by keeping track of the decisions and actions of Agesilaus alone.[24]

This brings us to Theopompus' *Philippica*, published some time shortly after King Philip of Macedon's assassination in the summer of 336.[25] As we can tell from his criticism of Theopompus discussed just above, Polybius knew this work as well as his *Hellenica*, for the *Philippica* was the composition Theopompus moved on to after abandoning his history of Greece. The entire critique of Theopompus is motivated in Polybius by a more general review of the 'treatment of kings in history'.[26] Polybius implies that when historical writing is dominated by a single ruler, whether to censure or praise his actions, impartiality is lost (Plb. 8.8.3–9). Walbank has noted that Polybius was the first explicitly to articulate this notion.[27] It is important to observe that the word Polybius uses to characterize positive histories written about kings is *encomia* (Plb. 8.8.6)—precisely the term Xenophon used to describe his biography of Agesilaus (Xen. *Ages.* 10.3).[28] Polybius asserts that Theopompus stated in the proem of his history of Philip that what inspired him to write the work was the conviction that 'Europe had absolutely never before produced such a man as Philip son of Amyntas' (Plb. 8.9.1 = *FGrH* 115 F 27). Polybius is critical of Theopompus because he concentrates his attention on the prodigious faults of the leader, apparently to the exclusion of all else (Plb. 8.9.2–4). Although many have pretty much accepted Polybius' remarks without cavil,[29] others have felt that he did not grasp the larger

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[23] There is a large question implicated here, namely, which of the two works came first: Paul Cartledge, *Agesilaos and the Crisis of Sparta* (Baltimore, 1987), 65–6.

[24] Cf. ibid.; and John Dillery, *Xenophon and the History of His Times* (London/New York, 1995).

[25] Flower, *Theopompus of Chios*, 32–3 and n. 35.

[26] F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1957–79), ii. 78 ad Plb. 8.8 a–11.

[27] Ibid., ii. 79 ad Plb. 8.8.3.

[28] Cf. Michel Buijs, 'Aspectual Differences and Narrative Technique: Xenophone's *Hellenica* & *Agesilaus*', in Rutger J. Allan and Buijs (eds.), *The Language of Literature: Linguistic Approaches to Classical Texts* (Leiden/Boston, 2007), 123 and n. 3. Note also Isoc. 9.8–11.

[29] Famously Gilbert Murray, 'Theopompus, or the Cynic as Historian', in id., *Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1946), 149–70.

point Theopompus was trying to make: it was not just the faults of Philip that defined his age, it was all his actions and decisions.[30] To know Philip's career and character was the way to understand the epoch in which he lived. This was indeed a new conceptualization of what history was, and how it should be written. Indeed, some have even speculated that—more than the historians of Alexander, who could be seen to have written more narrow biographic or memoir history—Theopompus fashioned his history of Philip as simultaneously a history of his epoch.[31]

If Philip inspired the first large-scale history in the Greek tradition that was centred on one dominant figure, it was his son, Alexander the Great, who inspired the true flowering of this important genre of Greek historiography. The Greek historian and Roman statesman, Arrian of Bithynia, looking back from the second century AD, could observe that 'there is no one about whom more have written, or more at variance with each other' (Arrian *An.* Proem 2).[32] If we pause and think about the popularity of Alexander as an historical topic, we immediately confront a significant issue. While popular he may have been in Greek historiography, none of the contemporary accounts of his career remains, and the histories that have survived to us are dependent on these earlier ones, and are all much later.[33] To be sure, it is dangerous in the extreme to base any judgements of ancient authors on the hazards of transmission,[34] but it is nonetheless arresting that the histories of Alexander, for all their number and the popularity of their subject, fared so poorly. Much the same could be said of the histories of Hellenistic kings that they inspired.[35] Jane Hornblower, following Jacoby, has speculated that it was precisely the 'eulogistic and, no doubt, parochial character of such work' that led to their almost total disappearance, with the exception of later quotation and excerption.[36] But as the quote from Arrian cited just above suggests, at least in the second century AD, many of these works were still around, so much so that Arrian felt he had to defend the decision to add yet another to an already teeming subfield of Greek historiography (Arr. *An.* Proem 3). The connection between Alexander and historiography, especially of a laudatory nature, was proverbial. Indeed, many years before Arrian, during the last decades of the Roman Republic, Cicero could exclaim: 'How many writers of his deeds is Alexander the Great said to have had with him!' (Cic. *Arch.* 24).

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[30] See esp. W. R. Connor, 'History without Heroes: Theopompus' Treatment of Philip of Macedon', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 8 (1967), 133–54.

[31] Jane Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia* (Oxford, 1981), 183.

[32] Cf. Strabo 15.1.2; and A. B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*, 2 vols. (1980–), i. 43 ad Arr. *An.* Proem 2.

[33] A. B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1988), 295.

[34] Cf. e.g. Leighton D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of Latin Classics* (Oxford, 1983), p. xiii.

[35] Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia*, 184 n. 12.   [36] Ibid., 184–5.

It is interesting to note further that both Cicero and Arrian cite the same episode as reflecting Alexander's interest in having his deeds recorded: while visiting the tomb of Achilles, Alexander considered the hero 'blessed' because he had Homer to memorialize him (Cic. *Arch.* 24; Arr. *An.* 1.12.1). And yet Arrian, while he was acutely aware that his main sources (Aristobulus and Ptolemy) served with Alexander and thus were well informed (Arr. *An.* Proem 2), also knew that they actually wrote their histories of him after his death and hence were free from either coercion or the lure of a wage to distort their accounts. Cicero seems to imply that Alexander brought men along on his campaign precisely because they were already established historians.

But if this was his assumption, Cicero was wrong. Although Alexander probably had a considerable secretarial staff who may have been responsible for his 'Royal Diary', and further also retained the services of men known as the *bematists*, or 'measurers', who were charged with keeping technical records (*FGrH* 119–123), the only man in his army that we know already had a reputation as an historian before Alexander began his campaign of conquest was Callisthenes of Olynthus (*FGrH* 124). Callisthenes was a relative of Aristotle, and together with him drew up a list of the victors at the Pythian games at Delphi, for which they were thanked by the governing body of the shrine between 337 and 327 BC (*SIG*[3] 275 = *FGrH* 124 T 23).[37] But some time before this, and before he went to Asia with Alexander, Callisthenes had also written up his own *Hellenica* (*FGrH* 124 FF 8–13, 15–27). He began his account, not where Thucydides left off, but in 387, when the Greeks were negotiating an end to the Corinthian War, and at the same time reaching an entente with the Persian king (the King's Peace) that ceded the Greeks of Asia Minor to Persian control. Callisthenes concluded with the start of the so-called Third Sacred War in 357/56. It seems that in choosing these limits for his *Hellenica* he was seeking to pick up where Theopompus stopped his own *Hellenica*, and to stop where Theopompus' *Philippica* began.[38]

It seems almost certain that Callisthenes called his work on Alexander 'The Exploits of Alexander'.[39] If Theopompus' title of *Phlippica* is ambiguous, permitting an interpretation that means essentially 'the career of Philip', and also one that means 'the period of Philip', there is no doubt about what Callisthenes' title would have meant. The 'deeds' or 'exploits' of Alexander are not just any deeds of course, but must be heroic deeds. In styling his work in this way, Callisthenes was unique among the historians of Alexander.[40] To be sure, historical writing

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[37] P. J. Rhodes and Robin Osborne (eds.), *Greek Historical Inscriptions 404–323 BC* (Oxford, 2003), 394–5.

[38] Lionel Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great* (Philadelphia, 1960), 25.

[39] *FGrH* 124 T 26, supported by a *dipinto* from Tauromenium: see most recently F. Battistoni, 'The Ancient *Pinakes* from Tauromenion: Some New Readings', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 157 (2006), 171 and n. 10.

[40] M. Plezia, 'Der Titel und der Zweck von Kallisthenes' Alexandergeschichte', *Eos*, 60 (1972), 263–4.

had always privileged the actions of leaders, and in this it could be argued that the epic inheritance of Homer was especially felt: to sing 'the deeds of men' (the *klea andron*: see Hom. *Il.* 9.189 and 524; *Od.* 8.73). But the Homeric legacy in Greek historical writing is put on a completely new footing with Callisthenes: in this particular subgenre of royal history, historiography becomes tales of heroic accomplishment, and little else is permitted.[41] This orientation very likely had a lot to do with Alexander's own admiration for, and rivalry with, Achilles of Homer's *Iliad*.[42] Although Callisthenes himself would eventually fall out of favour with Alexander over the issue of doing obeisance to the king (*proskynesis*) and be put to death,[43] his account of Alexander was notorious in antiquity for its uncritical, even fawning treatment of Alexander. Indeed, in his work *On Flattery*, the first century BC philosopher and critic Philodemus could write of Callisthenes that while he 'was deifying Alexander in his histories, he resisted his obeiesances'.[44] What Philodemus was probably thinking of are those places in his history of Alexander where Callisthenes intruded the supernatural into his narrative. So, for example, just after Alexander crossed the boundary of the Persian Empire and the old Athenian *arche* of the fifth century, Callisthenes claimed that the sea along the coast of Pamphylia actually moved out of the way to let Alexander and his army pass (*FGrH* 124 F 31; cf. Arr. *An.* 1.26.1–2). The larger point to note is that Callisthenes evidently was instrumental in setting the heroic tone, and even some of the stock scenes, of subsequent Alexander histories. Also important are the precise words Plutarch uses to criticize those who recorded Alexander's passage through the Pamphylian Sea, which 'has become for many historians a vivid opportunity for terrifying bombast'. The last phrase is particularly important, for it suggests that Callisthenes also indulged in what is sometimes erroneously called 'tragic history'[45]—the presentation of material in historical narrative that is expected to produce a strong emotional reaction in the reader or audience, allegedly one of the hallmarks of Hellenistic historiography (more on this below).

We seem to be on altogether different ground when we turn to another exceptionally important Alexander historian, Ptolemy, son of Lagus (*FGrH* 138). We have already noted that he, along with Aristobulus (*FGrH* 139), formed the backbone of Arrian's own *Anabasis Alexandri*, the best account of Alexander's conquest to survive from antiquity. Indeed, it could be argued that Ptolemy was

[41] See esp. Charles W. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley, 1983), 63–4.

[42] Note Arr. *An.* 1.12.1; also Plut. *Alex.* 5.8 and 8.2; Str. 13.1.27.

[43] Cf. Arr. *An.* 4.10–12, 14; Cur. 8.5.13–8.8.21; Plut. *Alex.* 54–55.

[44] *FGrHist* 124 T 21. See John Dillery, 'Exile: The Making of the Greek Historian', in Jan Felix Gaertner (ed.), *Writing Exile: The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond* (Leiden/Boston, 2007), 56.

[45] F. W. Walbank, *Selected Papers: Studies in Greek and Roman Historiography* (Cambridge, 1985), 239.

Arrian's most important source, for in addition to serving with Alexander on his campaigns—something that could also be said of Aristobulus—Ptolemy was a king, 'and, being himself a king, it was more shameful for him than any other to lie' (Arr. *An.* Proem 2). While this comment has struck modern readers as shockingly naive, Arrian probably intended it to mean that, being a king, Ptolemy 'could not afford to be caught out in a lie'.[46] As Arrian's procedure for composition would suggest, it seems that Ptolemy did indeed produce what appears to be a more factual, sobre account of Alexander's conquest than did Callisthenes or Cleitarchus.[47] But, with that said, Ptolemy was no less tendentious and propagandistic.[48] Figures of enemy losses are grossly exaggerated; Ptolemy himself figures prominently as an historical agent; conspiracies against Alexander and court intrigues are 'whited-out'; enemies of Ptolemy fare badly on the whole. In sum: Alexander and Ptolemy could do no wrong. And though it might seem out of character, there were even elements of the supernatural in Ptolemy as well. Most notoriously, Alexander's famous expedition to the Siwah Oasis in 331 to consult the oracle of Ammon: while Aristobulus and the Vulgate tradition, together with Callisthenes, had Alexander's marching column guided by a pair of crows across the Libyan desert, Ptolemy had a pair of talking snakes.[49] The difference is telling. Ptolemy sought to associate himself closely with Alexander, and specifically found utility in stressing Alexander's divinity. When Ptolemy declared himself king of Egypt in 305, he had himself represented on coins and monuments in ways that were meant to recall Alexander's association with divine Egyptian kingship—an association that included showing the ruler as the son of Amun-Re, and which also featured the Uraeus snake. It makes perfect sense then, in the light of his treatment of Alexander as dynastic founder, that Ptolemy would have Alexander led by snakes to the shrine where he would be declared the son of Zeus/Ammon, and hence the rightful ruler of Egypt.

There is a larger point to register here as well. If this branch of Hellenistic historiography was dominated by figures of royalty, it is worth observing that in Ptolemy we have the actual fusion of historian and king. To be sure, he did not write a history of his own career and rule, but he was the very start of a tradition of historical writing by kings and other dynasts that continued throughout antiquity. Two more in his line were also historians: Ptolemy VIII (*FGrH* 234) wrote up his *Hypomnemata* [Memoirs], and before him, the official account of the Ptolemaic invasion of Syria in the Third Syrian War (246–41 BC) is actually

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[46] E. Badian, *Studies in Greek and Roman History* (Oxford, 1964), 258.

[47] Note Plut. *Alex.* 46.1–2: Cleitarchus among those who had Alexander fight the mythical Amazons; Ptolemy, Aristobulus and Duris of Samos among those who assert the episode was a fiction (*plasma*).

[48] Badian, *Studies in Greek and Roman History*, 258.

[49] Arr. *An.* 3.3.5–6 = *FGrH* 138 F 8, 139 FF 13–15; cf. 124 F 14 a and b.

told in the voice of Ptolemy III.[50] There were many other ruler-historians in the period too, and these royal memoirs mark the beginning of a long tradition that will include several Roman generals: note, for example, Aemilius Scaurus, Rutilius Rufus, Sulla, Lucullus, Caesar, Octavian/Augustus, and also barbarian kings who were also historians; for example, Juba of Mauretania (*FGrH* 275) and Herod I of Judaea (*FGrH* 236).[51]

It is appropriate here to mention briefly the work of Duris of Samos (*FGrH* 76), who lived from about 340 to 260 BC. With him are gathered several of the strands of inquiry I have been following in this section. First of all, he was a ruler who also wrote history—specifically he was the tyrant of Samos, as was in all likelihood his father.[52] He was allegedly also, at least superficially, familiar with the thought of the Peripatos. But most importantly, in his work we see very clearly the spectre of 'tragic history', mentioned already in connection with Callisthenes. It is a 'spectre' because the concept 'tragic history' is in fact largely a modern one.[53] Its origins in the ancient world have been fruitlessly debated for a long time,[54] but its importance in the assessment of Hellenistic historiography cannot be overstated: 'tragic history' is history written to shock, arouse pity, excite disgust—in short, it is the vivid presentation of events designed to produce an emotive effect. It is often argued that this type of historical writing had its beginning in the Hellenistic period, during which time it was also thought to flourish, even predominate, as the primary register of historiographic discourse. And herein lies the 'smoking gun' proving degeneracy: Hellenistic history-writing is not as good as Classical, and the reason for this is its embrace of 'tragic history'. Omitting extensive discussion of the numerous objections to 'tragic history' as it has been defined and observed by modern scholarship, I register only two interrelated problems here that connect with issues at the start of this essay. First, detecting 'tragic history' in Hellenistic era historians obscures the fact that the giants of Classical historiography, Herodotus and Thucydides, both indulged in narrating episodes that could be styled 'tragic' or 'sensational'.[55] Second, Hellenistic historiography was itself extremely varied, and not at all limited to 'tragic history'.

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[50] P.Petrie 2.45 = P.Petrie 3.144; cf. *FGrH* 160. Graham Shipley, *The Greek World after Alexander 323–30 BC* (London/New York, 2000), 203.

[51] Cf. Klaus Meister, 'Autobiographische Literatur und Memoiren (Hypomnemata) (*FGrHist* 227–238)', in Herman Verdin, Guido Schepens, and E. de. Keyser (eds.), *Purposes of History: Studies in Greek Historiography from the 4th to the 2nd Centuries BC* (Leuven, 1990), 83–9.

[52] Robert B. Kebric, *In the Shadow of Macedon: Duris of Samos* (Wiesbaden, 1977), 6–9.

[53] It is true that in an extended criticism of Phylarchus, Polybius compares writers of sensational history to writers of tragedy (Plb. 2.56.10 = *FGrH* 81 T 3): see Walbank, *Selected Papers,* 224. But Walbank (ibid., 241) has shown that the term 'tragic history' is really a modern conception and a misrepresentation of ancient views on history-writing.

[54] The debate centres on whether its origins can be found in Aristotle and his school or with Isocrates: F. W. Walbank, 'History and Tragedy', *Historia*, 9 (1960), 216–34 demolished both positions.

[55] Cf. A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (London/Sydney, 1988), 30.

What exactly did Duris write, and why has it, along with the work of others such as Phylarchus (*FGrH* 81), been seen to represent 'tragic historiography'? He wrote a history entitled *Macedonica* [Macedonian History] that began with the year 370 and went down to the battle of Koroupedion and the death of the last of Alexander's direct successors, Lysimachus, in 281. In the proem to this work, Duris lodged the following complaint: 'Ephorus and Theopompus fell far short of the events, for they neither took up any *mimesis* or pleasure in their telling, but were concerned only with the reporting itself' (*FGrH* 76 F 1). I have left untranslated the word *mimesis*: taken to be a link to Aristotle on the nature of poetry and music, and in particular tragedy (cf. Arist. *Po.* 1447a), the word probably meant no more than 'representation' for Duris.[56] He seems to have aimed at writing history that would entertain, and chiefly through the telling of remarkable events in a particularly vivid way. The events need not always have been 'tragic'. Illustrative of the nature of Duris' historical writing is F 10, most likely from a critical review of the career of Demetrius of Phalerum, an Athenian who, imposed by the Macedonians, ruled over his city as a governor from 318 to 307.[57] The passage focuses on his dissolute and immoral character, and culminates with the scene of Demetrius being celebrated at a state festival with a song appropriate for a god. Hazardous as it is to reconstruct complex historiographic texts on the basis of a few quotations and paraphrases by later authors, the impression nonetheless persists that what was distinct in the practice of Duris and his 'follower' Phylarchus, who provided even more theatrical scenes thought to be typical of sensationalist 'tragic history',[58] was largely the scale and emphasis they gave to sensational material. Vivid, even emotive writing can be found all the way back in Herodotus and Thucydides, but Duris and Phylarchus indulged in it to a much greater degree, putting it at the centre of their narratives, and not in editorial asides and digressions.[59]

Comparison of Duris and Phylarchus with the remains of Hieronymus of Cardia (*FGrH* 154) emphasizes the point that even within the subgenre of historiography centred on the activities of kings, profound differences are to be seen. A friend and adviser to no fewer than four early Hellenistic rulers, Hieronymus wrote a history that seems to have covered events from the period immediately following the death of Alexander the Great to the death of Pyrrhus of Epirus.[60] If this is correct, then Hieronymus saw himself as another continuator historian, taking as his topic the crucial years that witnessed the conversion of Alexander's

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[56] Walbank, *Selected Papers*, 227.   [57] Kebric, *In the Shadow of Macedon*, 50.

[58] According to Plutarch *Per.* 28.2 = *FGrH* 76 F 67, Duris 'added tragic details' to Pericles' capture of Samos in 439 BC (in this case note his native land), beyond what was reported in the accounts of the same event by Thucydides, Ephorus, and Aristotle.

[59] Cf. Christopher Tuplin, 'Continuous Histories (*Hellenica*)', in Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, i. 169.

[60] Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia*, 76–9.

empire into the various Hellenistic sovereignties ruled by Alexander's generals, and then their sons (323–272 BC). Indeed, the very idea of organizing the successors of Alexander into a first and second generation—the so-called Receivers (the Diadochoi) and their Descendants (the Epigonoi)—may have originated with Hieronymus.[61] In any case, unlike previous histories of this type, Hieronymus had to change the central focus of his narrative, as authority passed from Eumenes to the different members of the Antigonid family.[62] Although the remains of his history are even less substantial than those belonging to Duris and Phylarchus, it is clear that his narrative formed the backbone to Diodorus of Sicily's Books 18, 19, and 20.[63] Judging on the basis of this material, and its contrast with Book 17 of Diodorus, it is clear that Hieronymus was an historian of the first order, finding inspiration for his historiography in the work of Thucydides. He seems to have followed the division of the year into campaigning seasons, and focused his attention on battles and treaties, employing throughout a precise technical vocabulary; correspondingly, there was an absence of the divine and supernatural, as well as a noticeable lack of pathetic detail and gossip.[64] Significantly, Hieronymus was probably also the first Greek historian to take more than a passing interest in Rome (*FGrH* 154 FF 11–13).[65] Although dangerous, it is nonetheless a telling observation that both Duris and Phylarchus earned such notoriety in the ancient world among other writers of history, whereas Hieronymus remained relatively obscure. We can go a long way towards a better understanding of Hellenistic historiography if we see that there was obviously room for writers like Hieronymus, but simultaneously that they were clearly in the minority, to judge, for instance, by the reactions of Polybius.[66]

UNIVERSAL HISTORY

It is perhaps tempting to think that Greek historiography only looked beyond the Greek world in the aftermath of Alexander's conquests, stimulated by the rapid increase in Greek contact with, and knowledge of, non-Greek civilizations. But such 'universalizing' interests could actually be said to start in the embryonic period of Greek historical writing: Hecataeus of Miletus authored a work at the end of the sixth century BC or beginning of the fifth called the *Periegesis* or *Periodos Ges*—the 'Journey Around the World' (*FGrH* 1 FF

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[61] Ibid., 78–9.   [62] Ibid., 35, 79.   [63] Ibid., ch. 2 and Appendix 2.
[64] Ibid., 107–8 for a general assessment; division of the year, 34 and 101; technical vocabulary, 34–5.
[65] Ibid., 248; Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley, 1990), 100. Theopompus was the first to mention the Romans (*FGrH* 115 F 317).
[66] Cf. Walbank, *Polybius*, 40.
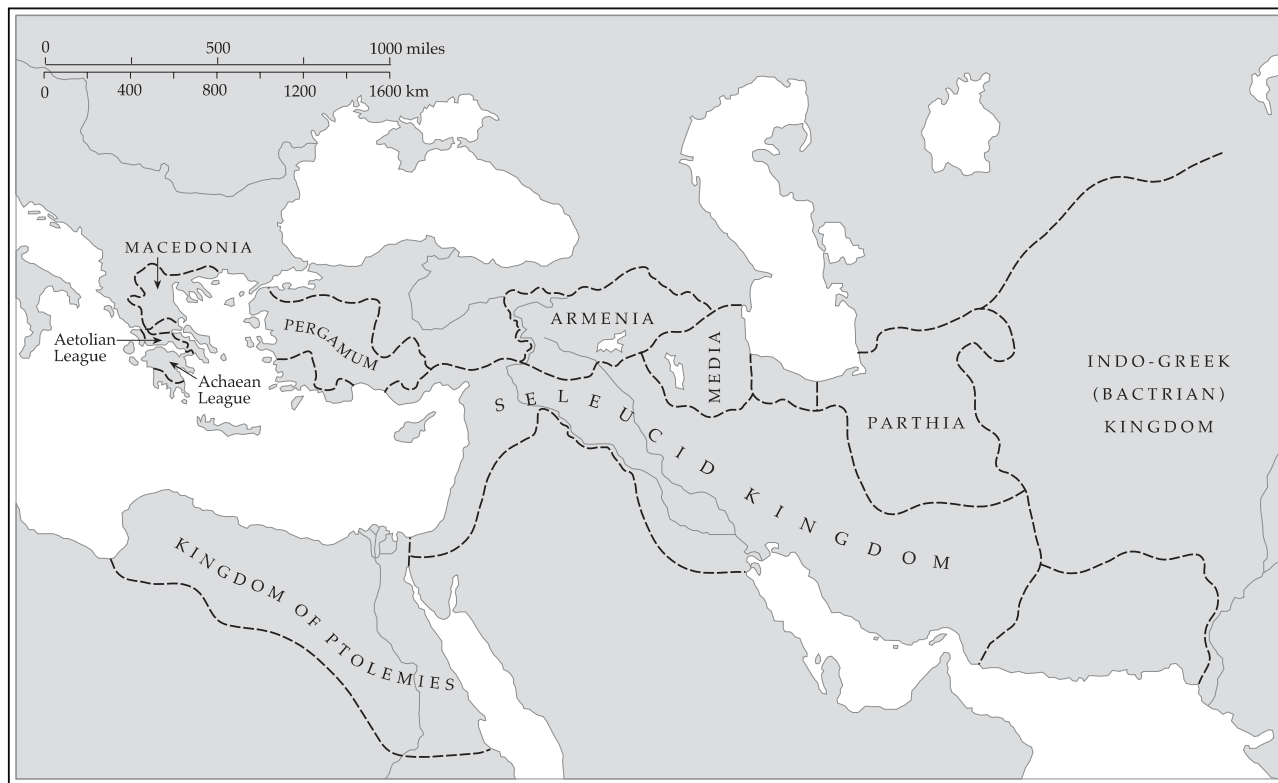
Hellenistic Kingdoms 185 BC.

37–359)—a treatise that divided the world into Europe, Asia, and Libya/Egypt. Furthermore, as the first sentences of Herodotus' history announce, the events of all humanity, Greek and non-Greek, were to be dealt with in his account. But while Greek historiography from its inception could embrace a view of the past that took in significant parts of the non-Greek world, particularly the East,[67] it is not until the fourth century that true 'world' or 'universal history' was composed by Greek authors. Polybius famously claimed that the first and only man to write universal history before his own was Ephorus (Plb. 5.33.2 = *FGrH* 70 T 7),[68] who was a contemporary of Theopompus, and slightly younger than Xenophon.

But before turning to Ephorus in earnest, it is important to ask a preliminary question. If there were always currents in Greek historical writing that encouraged the normally parochially Greek-centred view of the past to take account of the non-Greek world, what changed in the fourth century to prompt a figure like Ephorus to write something approaching a world history? Charles Fornara has made the attractive suggestion that when the idea of a Greek 'mental culture' (*paideia*) developed in the fourth century that was distinct from other cultures, the Greeks became aware of the need for works that stressed the common features of the Greeks as opposed to non-Greeks—ones that 'gave special propriety and intrinsic justification to a universal history'.[69] This development marks a profound shift in Greek historical writing: historiography centred on Hellenic matters broadly defined becomes, in the hands of some historians at least, world history, albeit with Greece at its centre.

It is certainly the case that already in the second half of the fifth century, important developments in the 'thought world' of the Greeks took place that made possible the launching of universal history in the fourth century. Democritus of Abdera (DK no. 68) seems to have promoted a view of earliest humanity that used Egypt as the model for the first steps in organized political life;[70] at the very least, his understanding of the first humans did not insist on the centrality of the Greeks. Similarly, Antiphon 'the Sophist' could write at the end of the fifth century that 'by birth, at least we are all naturally adapted in every respect to be either Greeks or barbarians'.[71] If there were no essential differences between

[67] Cf. Oswyn Murray, 'Herodotus and Hellenistic Culture', *Classical Quarterly*, 22 (1972), 200–13.

[68] Cf. Diod. 4.1.3 (= *FGrH* 70 T 8) and 5.1.4 (= T 11). See J. M. Alonso-Núñez, 'The Emergence of Universal Historiography from the 4th to the 2nd Centuries BC', in Verdin Verdin et al. (eds.), *Purposes of History*, 175; and Frances Pownall, *Lessons from the Past: The Moral Use of History in Fourth-Century Prose* (Ann Arbor, 2004), 114 and n. 3.

[69] Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome*, 43.

[70] This position depends on who is thought to be the source behind Diod. 1.7–8. I follow Thomas Cole, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology* (1967; 2nd edn, Atlanta, 1990), 174–92, 222.

[71] Gerard J. Pendrick, *Antiphon the Sophist: The Fragments* (Cambridge, 2002), F 44b, 180–1; also 53–67.

Greek and non-Greek, then those differences that were thought to exist stemmed from differences between cultures, broadly defined.

Ephorus (*c.*405–330 BC) wrote at least four works: *Epichorios*, a local history of his native Cyme in Asia Minor (*FGrH* 70 F 1); two treatises, *On Discoveries* (FF 2–5) and *On Diction* (F 6); and his most important work, *Histories*, in thirty books. These titles should alert us to problems associated with the boundaries of genre constructed by Jacoby: while Ephorus' fame rests on his universal history, he also wrote local history. Furthermore, the same tendency towards the history of culture that we will see animate portions of his *Histories* is clearly also in evidence in his work *On Discoveries.* To judge by the testimonia, Ephorus began his most ambitious work with a proem that was similar to that of Theopompus (F 7). More helpfully, we are also told how Ephorus approached contemporary and ancient history:

regarding the things that happened in our own time, we consider the most reliable those who speak most accurately, but regarding ancient matters, those who proceed thus [that is, speaking most accurately] we consider to be the most unbelievable, on the assumption that it is not probable to remember through such a length of time all the events and the majority of the things that were said.   (*FGrH* 70 F 9)

In other words, the same criterion Ephorus used to evaluate the reliability of contemporary sources—accuracy through providing detail—is an index of untrustworthiness when it comes to reports about ancient matters. Ephorus thus articulated a principle of historical inquiry that is enormously significant, and that has proved influential in the modern period, especially to B. G. Niebuhr.[72] It seems clear that Ephorus modelled his introduction after the famous programmatic section of Thucydides (1.20–22), who also famously distinguished between ancient and recent events, and between events and speeches. In particular, Thucydides noted that precise control over recent events was difficult (Thuc. 1.22.2), and before this observation, that only the 'general sequence' of ancient events could really be determined, implying that any more precise control over them was impossible (1.20.1). Thucydides was more interested in the very recent past: contemporary history. Significantly, Ephorus borrows Thucydides' methodology but has to adapt it to his particular purposes: to recover both the remote past and more recent events. Indeed, Ephorus seems to have treated events from the legendary Return of the Sons of Heracles to Philip II's siege of Perinthus in 341/0 (T 10; cf. F 117). Strabo has given us a very helpful insight into Ephorus' treatment of material from the mythical past. While praising Ephorus' usual 'care' in the handling of myth, indeed even noticing that Ephorus censured 'those who are enamoured of myth in the writing of history', Strabo evidently found Ephorus too accepting of legendary accounts of the early history of Delphi

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(F 31b = Str. 9.3.11–12). It seems likely that Ephorus largely avoided myth, but when necessary (such as giving the genealogy of the royal houses of regions) he would refer to them in a rationalizing spirit.[73] Diodorus even states quite clearly that Ephorus began his history with the story of the Return of the Sons of Heracles as part of his project to avoid or 'pass over' the world of myth (T 8).

 Discussion of the temporal spread of Ephorus' *Histories* leads naturally to the corresponding question of its treatment of space, and in so doing, to a question of major importance in connection with the work. Diodorus, who clearly followed Ephorus in the composition of his own universal history, praises Ephorus for 'hitting the mark' with his universal history, both in its use of 'language', and for its composition (literally 'economy'), inasmuch as each one of the *Histories*' books 'covers events by single topic' (T 11 = Diod. 5.1.4). What this phrase probably means is that Ephorus' work was organized by book or groupings of books that each dealt with a single topic, best understood as the history of a particular region.[74] This is an extremely important development, for while in practice there was often little that separated Ephorus' treatment of major events in Greek history from that of his sources (see below), his scheme of a universal account of the past organized by region created the possibility of historiography written not from the point of view of a single dominant power or region, but from several: history could be conceived as going beyond a polis-centred account (such as Athens or Sparta), and could even take in non-Greek lands. As always, it seems, just about every major development in Greek historical writing can also be found to be anticipated to some degree in one or both of its first and greatest practitioners, and Ephorus' broad understanding of the horizon of historical significance is no exception. Herodotus, while at times promoting an Athenocentric account of the Persian Wars, nonetheless has a remarkably generous view of the past that takes into account the major regions of the Greek world (Ionia, mainland Greece, Magna Graecia), and foreign lands (such as Persia, Egypt, Babylon, Scythia). In this connection it is important to note, for instance, that Ephorus (probably following Callisthenes) can provide the names of the Persian commanders at the battle of the Eurymedon River in the early 460s (F 192).[75] More securely, in F 30a and 30b, Ephorus can be seen clearly to divide up the remote areas of the inhabited world into the East occupied by the Indians, the South by the Ethiopians, the West by the Celts, and the North by the Scythians.[76] Recent scholars have even speculated that Ephorus was inspired to write his *Histories* by the rise of Macedonian power.[77] It should be noted, however, on the basis of what survives of Ephorus, that despite Polybius' praise, he seems to

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[73] John Marincola, 'Universal History from Ephorus to Diodorus', in id. (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, i. 173.

[74] Robert Drews, 'Ephorus and History Written κατὰ γένος', *American Journal of Philology*, 83 (1963), 244–55.

[75] Cf. Diod. 11.60.5–61; *FGrH* 70 F 191.

[76] Alonso-Núñez, 'The Emergence of Universal Historiography', 176–7.   [77] Ibid., 176.

have focused primarily on the Greek world, and to have taken up the non-Greek world only in fairly marginal ways. Universal in design and intent, it still read very much as a Greek history.

It was often asserted in antiquity that both Ephorus and Theopompus were 'students' of the great Athenian rhetorician Isocrates. Indeed, they required from their reputed teacher different instruction: 'Ephorus was simple by nature, "laid-back" and torpid, and had no tautness', while Theopompus was the opposite, 'sharp and ill-disposed, he was wordy and flowing in his language and full of industry, a lover of truth in what he wrote'. Ephorus therefore required the goad from Isocrates, whereas Theopompus, the bit (T 28a; cf. T 28b). While it is no doubt a mistake to put any credence in this observation[78]—ancient literary biography is replete with false connections generated by perceived similarities between authors[79]—it does suggest that Ephorus, and Theopompus for that matter, were regarded as historians influenced by oratory. Rhetorical history, much like tragic history, is probably a concept best abandoned, but I think the sense that both Ephorus and Theopompus were 'rhetorical' arose from a marked tendency on their part to pass moral judgements on historical figures. To judge by the narrative supplied by Diodorus, it seems to be the case that Ephorus understood the Peloponnesian War as stemming directly from the personal needs and ambitions of Pericles, specifically in order to draw attention away from charges of personal malfeasance (F 196). This portrait is, of course, highly critical of Pericles, and contrasts with the view we have of him in Thucydides (note esp. Thuc. 2.60.2–3); indeed, Ephorus' view of Pericles makes him look more like the Alcibiades of Thucydides (for example, Thuc. 6.15–16; cf. 2.65.7). Although the Suda attributes to Ephorus a work called *On Virtues and Vices*, this was probably in fact a collection of excerpts taken from his *Histories*, but the confusion is telling: Ephorus' historiography could be personal and censorious, very likely in the prefaces to his books.[80]

If Ephorus laid the groundwork for universal history, it was taken up in earnest in the later fourth century by two figures of great importance: Timaeus of Tauromenium (*FGrH* 566) and Dicaearchus of Messana.[81] Both men were from Sicily, and while there are some notable exceptions, many of the best known practitioners of universal history came from the western Greek world and, in

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[78] Flower, *Theopompus of Chios*, 43–4.

[79] Mary R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of Greek Poets* (Baltimore, 1981) is authoritative.

[80] Cf. E. Schwartz, 'Ephoros', *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 11 (1907), 16; and Pownall, *Lessons from the Past*, 113. On the prefaces as places where Ephorus' judgments were often to be found: A. Andrewes, 'Diodorus and Ephoros: One Source of Misunderstanding', in J. W. Eadie and Josiah Ober (eds.), *The Craft of the Ancient Historian: Essays in Honor of Chester G. Starr* (Lanham, 1985), 189–97.

[81] Dicaearchus fragments: David C. Mirhady, 'Dicaearchus of Messana: The Sources, Text and Translation', in William W. Fortenbaugh and Eckart Schütrumpf (eds.), *Dicaearchus of Messana: Text, Translation, and Discussion* (New Brunswick/London, 2001), 1–142.

particular, Sicily. But both Timaeus and Dicaearchus should also be connected to the city of Athens: Timaeus lived there for fifty years while in exile,[82] and Dicaearchus was a member of the Peripatos or Lyceum, the School of Aristotle, located in Athens.[83]

Timaeus wrote three works of importance for the history of historical writing in antiquity: *Olympionikai*, or a list of Olympic victors coordinated with lists also of kings and ephors at Sparta, Athenian archons, and priestesses of Hera at Argos (T 1, and esp. T 10 = Plb. 12.11.1); *Sicilian Histories* (T 1); and a monograph on Pyrrhus' war with Rome (T 9 a and b). In saying that Timaeus exploited universal history in ways that went beyond what we see in embryo in Ephorus, we have to proceed with caution. While Timaeus certainly noticed events in the East—thus he could even synchronize the birth of Alexander the Great with the destruction by fire of the temple of Artemis at Ephesus (F 150 a and b), and later Alexander's sack of Tyre with the theft of an important statue of Apollo at Gela by the Carthaginians (F 106)[84]—his eyes were fixed for the most part on the West.[85] The centre of Timaeus' world was Sicily. Indeed, Polybius could later criticize him for lionizing the Corinthian Timoleon, who had freed Syracuse, while dismissing Callisthenes for his attempts to deify Alexander the Great (Plb. 12.23.7). Polybius goes on to complain that Timaeus, although he was writing only about Italy and Sicily, was claiming to be like 'those who made systematic studies about the inhabited world and universal history' (Plb. 12.23.7).[86] We could take Polybius' criticism to mean that Timaeus was essentially a provincially minded historian who wrote about his native region as if it were the most important in all the world, and this is probably largely correct. However, Polybius' observation also suggests an ambitious orientation to Timaeus' historiography, even if it was one that Polybius found risible: if in one obvious sense his history of Sicily was regionally biased, it must also have been in another sense a world history.

It is not difficult to determine why Timaeus' history-writing could be considered universal. As Arnaldo Momigliano has put it, to varying degrees Timaeus provided 'the whole political and cultural history of the Western Greeks in the framework of a geographical-ethnographical description of Italy, Gaul, Spain, Britain, Libya, Corsica, Sardinia, and the smaller islands of the western Mediterranean'.[87] Indeed, it is in this context of universal history centred on the western Mediterranean that we should place one of the most important frag-

[82] Cf. Momigliano, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, 40.

[83] Note the detail of F 81 = Athen. 13.67 594E–595A.

[84] Denis Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History* (Berkeley, 2007), 48.

[85] Momigliano, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, 46.

[86] F. W. Walbank, 'The Two-Way Shadow: Polybius among the Fragments', in Guido Schepens and Jan Bollansée (eds.), *The Shadow of Polybius: Intertextuality as a Research Tool in Greek Historiography* (Leuven, 2005), 12–13; and Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, 50.

[87] Momigliano, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, 48–9.

ments of his *oeuvre*, namely F 60: Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*A.R.* 1.74.1) reports that Timaeus placed by some method unknown to him the foundation of Rome thirty-eight years before the First Olympiad (= 814 BC), and synchronized the foundation of Carthage to the same date as well. The importance of the synchronism is that it demonstrates Timaeus' recognition that Rome was emerging as a great power, indeed equivalent to Carthage, which the Greeks had known for some time as a major player in the western Mediterranean.[88] But note also several implications of this most important synchronism. First, that all human history can be charted on Greek time—even though the Greek time-reckoning system is, in this case, not strictly speaking adequate since that date in question is located before the Olympiad years commence. Universal or world history is now really possible, because a single system of establishing dates can be applied to it. Second, as Denis Feeney has shown so well, Timaeus was in fact the first writer to provide a precise date for the foundation of Rome, and what is more, the dating itself was over five hundred years later than the time when he located the fall of Troy.[89] In other words, Rome was not founded in the heroic period of the 'returns' (*nostoi*) of the Trojan War heroes, but was radically 'down-date[d] from mythical to historical times'.[90] The barbarian world did not need the Greek mythical past to account for its origins, as was so often the case in earlier Greek historical writing.[91] And third, although uncertain, it seems likely that Timaeus actually determined his date for the foundation of Carthage first, and then made Rome's foundation conform to this date.[92] All these details underscore the point that Timaeus' historiographic vision could be very large indeed, and that he was the first Greek historian to realize, at least in part, the ambitious scope of universal history. Perhaps we should not find this strange, given that Timaeus came originally from Sicily, itself a place where the interaction of Greek, Carthaginian, and Sicilian/Italic civilizations had been constant from the eighth century onward.[93]

But despite the (at times) wide angle of Timaeus' view, a parochial perspective and an insistent regional advocacy are never far from his purposes. Both Momigliano and Feeney were right to see that Timaeus' claim that Syracuse was the greatest and most beautiful of all Greek cities (F 40) must have constituted a challenge to Athens, coming from a man who lived in Athens for fifty years while in exile.[94] The same animus is in evidence elsewhere, as when Timaeus locates the rape of Persephone near Enna in Sicily, in order to show that Demeter

[88] Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, 53.   [89] Ibid., 92, 251 n. 136.

[90] D. Asheri, 'The Art of Synchronization in Greek Historiography: The Case of Timaeus of Tauromenium', *Scripta Classica Israelica*, 11 (1991/2), 69.

[91] E. Bickerman, 'Origines Gentium', *Classical Philology*, 47 (1952), 65–81.

[92] Cf. Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, 93.

[93] D. Asheri, 'Carthaginians and Greeks', in *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 4 (1988), 739–48.

[94] Momigliano, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, 40–1; and Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, 49.

had given Sicily agriculture first—that is, before Athens and Eleusis (F 164)—or, again, when he claims that Lysias was in fact Syracusan by birth, not Athenian (F 138), and thus oratory properly the child of Sicily, not Athens.[95] I think we can see in Timaeus' pro-Sicilian and anti-Athenian posturing the recognition that 'Athens' was quickly becoming synonymous with 'Greece', and Athenian culture—its *paideia*—the dominant element in Greek culture. Since the fourth century BC at least, Athens had attempted to express its dominance in the Greek world not only militarily but also culturally—a tendency that only increased the more its standing as an imperial power diminished.[96] Timaeus sought to combat this Athenian attempt at monopolizing the definition of Hellenic *paideia*.

Polybius took a dim view of Timaeus' building up of the Greek West. Indeed, remember what he had to say about the puffing up of Timoleon in Timaeus' account. In fact, we would know very little about Timaeus were it not for Polybius' long and biting critique of him that takes up much of what we possess today of Book 12 of Polybius' history. Another particularly vexing element of Timaeus' historiography for Polybius was the older historian's attitude towards other historians, combined with his reliance on older histories to compile his own narrative. Thus Polybius notes that Timaeus was most critical of earlier historiographers for faults he possessed to a greater degree than they (T 19 = Plb. 12.23.1), and in fact the Athenians even nicknamed him Timaeus Epitimaeus, or 'Timaeus Fault-finder' (T 16).[97] Yet while most uncharitable towards his predecessors, Polybius notes that Timaeus was an 'armchair' and bookish historian, spending long hours in libraries perusing documents and records, but doing no primary research (Plb. 12.25e.4–7; cf. T 19). And yet, despite all his difficulties with Timaeus, Polybius still paid him the supreme compliment—indeed the same that Thucydides paid Herodotus—namely, starting his history at the very point where Timaeus left off (Plb. 1.5.1), thereby acknowledging him as his chief predecessor in the writing of events of the western Mediterranean world.[98]

The interconnected nature of 'world' or 'universal history' with 'cultural history' is especially in evidence in the work of another Sicilian: Dicaearchus of Messana. Surely one of the most remarkable texts produced by the members of the Peripatos was Dicaearchus' *Life of Greece.* This work was nothing less than a cultural history of the Hellenic world.[99] It begins with a most un-Aristotelian

[95] Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar,* 49.

[96] See for example, T. Hölscher, 'The City of Athens: Space, Symbol, Structure', in Anthony Molho, Kurt Raaflaub, and Julia Emlen (eds.), *City States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy* (Ann Arbor, 1991), 377; and Paul Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates: The Image of the Intellectual in Antiquity*, trans. Alan Shapiro (Berkeley, 1995), 65 and n. 38.

[97] Cf. Momigliano, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, 39.

[98] Cf. Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar,* 49–50.

[99] See W. Ax, 'Dikaiarchs *Bios Hellados* und Varros *De Vita Populi Romani*', *Rheinisches Museum*, 143 (2000), 337–69.

view of primitive man in a state of primeval bliss, relying in part on a quote from Hesiod's *Works and Days* (FF 53–56B; Hesiod, *Erga* 116–19) to build a 'golden age' view of the past, rather than the progress model.[100] In three books we move from this golden age down to Philip, and even a discussion of the etymology of Academus, the eponymous hero of Plato's Academy (FF 77, 70). The surviving fragments show that the historical element was unsystematic and very slender indeed. Rather, Dicaearchus' focus was antiquarian, with discussions of the origins of political and social institutions, and especially of cultural landmarks; for example, important developments in the history of dance and song, and the attribution of the *Medea* not to Euripides but to Neophron (FF 72, 73, 62).[101]

But most important for the present discussion, according to Dicaearchus, non-Greek civilizations and individuals apparently had a significant place in the cultural history *of Greece*. In FF 60 and 61 we learn about the foundations of Nineveh by Ninus, and Babylon by 'Chaldaeus', who also gave his name to the priestly class of Babylonians, the Chaldaeans. Egypt is also brought up: Sesonchosis is singled out as a *nomothetes*, especially as the originator of the law that compelled Egyptians to follow the trade of their fathers (F 58). He is also credited with discovering the art of riding. Even more important is F 59: 'Dicaearchus in his first [book says] that after Or, son of Isis and Osiris, Sesonchosis became king. There are 2500 years from Sesonchosis to the kingship of Nilus, and from the kingship of Nilus to the capture of Troy 7, and from the capture of Troy to the first Olympiad 436, altogether [totalling] 2943 years.' It is very important to establish what sort of linkage between the Greek and non-Greek worlds Dicaearchus was attempting here. In the other fragments relating to the barbarian world he makes no explicit links to Greek history. Here the connection is chronological: the reign of Nilus is coordinated with the Fall of Troy and the first Olympiad. Of course it was fairly new to establish synchronisms between Greek and non-Greek history, and Dicaearchus' trio of pharaohs deserves a second look, for his choice of names suggests a very important point about the *Life of Greece*. Inasmuch as 'Or' is described as a son of Isis and Osiris, presumably the figure who is referred to here is none other than the god Horus, thought of as the first pharaoh (cf. Manetho *FGrH* 609 F 10 = Josephus *Ap.* 1.232), for in fact all sitting kings were 'Horus'. Sesonchosis is the great world conqueror of legend, better known as Sesostris, based chiefly on the historical ruler Senwesret I, but including elements derived from Senwesret III, Rameses II, and Sheshonk I.[102] Nilus is more puzzling. Other authors maintain that this name is an alternative

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[100] Un-Aristotelian golden age: E. R. Dodds, *The Ancient Concept of Progress and Other Essays on Greek Literature and Belief* (Oxford, 1973), 16–17.

[101] Unsystematic history with strong cultural focus: Ax, 'Dikaiarchs *Bios Hellados* und Varros *De Vita Populi Romani*', 344.

[102] Cf. Susan A. Stephens and John J. Winkler, *Ancient Greek Novels: The Fragments* (Princeton, 1995), 246.

for 'Pheron' or 'Phrouoro', the successor of Sesostris (*Anagraphai*, *FGrH* 610 F 1). In essence, then, in Nilus and Pheron we can see two features of authentic Egyptian royal ideology combined: Pheron is of course really the title 'Pharaoh' (Egyptian for 'Great House'), and Nilus is the Nile.[103] The king was often conceived of as responsible for the inundation of the river; indeed, it was arguably his most important function.[104] Dicaearchus' list of Egyptian pharaohs seems to have collapsed the years between the origins of the kingship and the most famous ruler of legend (Horus and Sesostris), and conversely has inserted a massive epoch between Sesostris and his shadowy heir, Nilus/Pheron. More importantly, though, the set is an emphatic, if also simplistic, statement of Egyptian kingship: we have the first pharaoh, the most powerful pharaoh, and 'Nile/Pharaoh' himself. At one level the group could be written off as an almost silly Greek oversimplification. But it is also a statement of Egyptian power and prestige. It is true that Dicaearchus' triad of kings need not imply any sort of deep interest in Egypt or direct familiarity with native views of its past, but it again raises the question: what is such a significant grouping of non-Greek rulers doing in a *Life of Greece*? Of course, at one level, Dicaearchus has done nothing more than practise a kind of 'orientalism' familiar already in Herodotus and others: non-Greek culture has been appropriated and made to conform to Greek cultural demands. After all, this distinguished group of pharaohs has been enlisted to give us the date of the Trojan War.[105] But the sort of 'orientalism' that the Greeks typically indulged in before Dicaearchus involved accounts of barbarian contact with the Greek world, where the presence of the 'other' was required by the matters being dealt with, such as war or migration. In Dicaearchus, the non-Greek seems to have a part to play in the *paideia*, indeed in the 'life' of Greece.

Although this work was nothing less than 'a history of civilization',[106] Dicaearchus called it a *bios* of Greece. Why? What did this way of viewing the past offer that was different from what others had done before him? Albrecht Dihle, in his discussion of the *Life of Greece* as the 'first cultural history of antiquity', noted that the term *bios* means a 'form', 'way', or 'content of life', and that this understanding of the word is precisely traceable to the early Peripatos; the *Bios Hellados* was a cultural *and ethical* history of Greece.[107] In contrast, *zoe* has a more biological meaning, translating to 'life' itself. That is to say, *bios* incorporates notions related to the manner of one's life; indeed, features specifically

[103] W. Drexler, 'Neilos', in Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher (ed.), *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, 3 vols. (1897–1902), iii. 93–4; and A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II*, 3 vols. (1975–88), iii. 38–9 ad Hdt. 2.111.

[104] Ludwig Koenen, 'The Ptolemaic King as Religious Figure', in Anthony W. Bulloch, Erich S. Gruen, A. A. Long, and Andrew Stewart (eds.), *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley, 1993), 77 and n. 116.

[105] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978), esp. 57–8.

[106] Felix Jacoby, *Atthis: The Local Chronicles of Ancient Athens* (Oxford, 1949), 142.

[107] Albrecht Dihle, *Studien zur griechischen Biographie* (2nd edn, Göttingen, 1970), 71.

important to humans living in society—customs, manners, character. By contrast, the term *zoe* can apply to humans, but also to all living creatures as well. So presumably Dicaearchus' choice of *bios* for the title of his work on Greece meant that the focus was to be on the customs, manners, and character of Greece or, its *paideia*. And in describing the evolution of Greek culture, evidently Egyptians, Babylonians, and other non-Greeks had a place.

Viewed from the perspective of the peripatetic understanding of *bios*, other components in the *Life of Greece*—indeed, other of Dicaearchus' works—make sense and assume an important place in this discussion. The cultivation of correct ways of life is the purpose of learning and living by *gnomai*. Hence, it is not surprising to find in the *Life of Greece* education through proverbs (F 57). And it is for precisely the same sort of practical wisdom that Dicaearchus singled out Ninus (for *sunesis*, 'shrewdness') and Sesostris (for his law-giving), two non-Greek rulers and sages.[108] Dicaearchus' work clearly approached something like a world history of ideas and culture, without particular regard to ethnicity. In this connection it is significant that Dicaearchus also wrote geographical works (the *Description of Greece*, the *Measurement of the Mountains of the Pelo-ponnese*, the *Circuit of the Earth*).[109] Indeed, it seems he believed that the shape of the Earth was spherical (F 121), and may even have offered a measurement of the Earth's circumference.[110] At the very least, using the Peloponnese as his centre, Dicaearchus proposed several large measurements of the Mediterranean basin (FF 124 and 125), suggesting the vision of a man interested in the totality of the *oikoumene*—the whole inhabited earth.[111]

Before turning to the last historian we have to consider in the category of 'universal history'—Diodorus—it is necessary to consider a figure whose place in the development of the subgenre is extremely important, but whose work has survived in a particularly poor and fragmentary state: Posidonius of Apamea in Syria (*FGrH* 87), who lived circa 135–51 BC.[112] Although from Syria, Posidonius became a citizen of Rhodes, taught there (T 2), and even served as a chief magistrate (T 6). He also went as a Rhodian ambassador to Rome in the winter of 87/86 (T 7). Pompey was supposed to have met Posidonius on Rhodes in 66 while the general was on his way to deal with Mithradates, and heard Posidonius deliver a lecture that he later wrote up (T 8 a and b).[113] Cicero frequently claimed that he learned philosophy from Posidonius while he was a student at

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[108] S. A. White, '*Principes Sapientiae*: Dicaearchus' Biography of Philosophy', in Fortenbaugh and Schütrumpf (eds.), *Dicaearchus of Messana*, 199.

[109] Note that P. T. Keyser, 'The Geographical Work of Dikaiarchos', ibid., 372 speculates that all the geographical titles ascribed to Dicaearchus may in fact derive from descriptions of different parts of a single treatise, the *Circuit of the Earth*.

[110] Keyser, 'The Geographical Work of Dikaiarchos', 363–4.

[111] Ibid., 371–2; Katherine Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (Oxford, 1999), 205.

[112] Available also in ibid., 347–73 Appendix B.   [113] Cf. ibid., 129.

Rhodes (T 29 Edestein/Kidd), and even sent him notes in Greek on his consul-
ship that he asked Posidonius on Rhodes to write up as a 'more elaborate' history.
Posidonius wrote back not only refusing, but saying that he was frightened off
from accepting the task (T 9, T 34 E/K). He was evidently a close friend to
several other elite Romans.[114]

A stoic polymath, Posidonius wrote two major historiographic works: the
Histories, which treated 'events after Polybius' in fifty-two books (T 1), going
from 146 to probably around 85 BC,[115] and another geographical treatise entitled
On Ocean that contained much historical information. Although it is difficult to
make out from the remains of his work, it seems that Posidonius was keenly
interested in the customs of peoples, and that hence his *Histories* had a strong
ethnographic focus, with the text being organized, roughly speaking, by region.[116]
F 1 famously treats Roman and Etruscan food ways and dining customs—topics
he also takes up in connection with several other peoples; for example, the
Parthians (F 5), Celts (F 15), and Germans (F 22). It needs to be said, however,
that inasmuch as all of these fragments derive from Athenaeus,[117] who had of
course his own reasons for privileging information on dining and feasting, the
preponderance of food-related texts in the fragments of Posidonius' *Histories* is
no doubt unrepresentative of the whole.

Posidonius' historiographic connection to Polybius is especially significant,
even if he did not formally 'continue' the older historian's work in quite the same
way that, for example, Polybius continued Timaeus' work, or Xenophon and
Theopompus the work of Thucydides. For both Polybius and Posidonius, Roman
power unified the world. The growth of Rome's imperial dominion inspired
Polybius' historical work (Plb. 1.1.5), while Posidonius dealt with the reality of
established Roman power.[118] Posidonius seems even to have sketched the evolu-
tion of monarchic power from the Golden Age to his own time (F 284 E/K), in
part perhaps as a justification of Roman rule.[119] But in Posidonius' case, his
Histories was also universal because he viewed the world as in some sense also a
physical unity, probably in ways that were anticipated by Dicaearchus of
Messana. Katherine Clarke, citing ancient testimony to the effect that Posido-
nius wrote history 'not inconsonantly with the philosophy which he adopted'
(T 12 a = Athen. 4.151 E), has stressed that his vision of the world was deeply
informed by the Stoic concept of *sympatheia*; namely, that the universe was in
fact animate and that 'events and processes were interrelated, mutually influen-
tial, and inseparable'. For instance, in F 219 E/K, Posidonius is alleged to have

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[114] See L. Edelstein and I. G. Kidd, *Posidonius*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1972–88), ii. 25, commentary
to T 32.
[115] Clarke, *Between Geography and History*, 154; the last dateable event in the extant fragments
comes from 86 BC.
[116] Ibid., 164–5. [117] Athen. 4. 153C–D, 4.152F–153A, 4.151E–152D, 4.153E.
[118] Clarke, *Between Geography and History*, 191 and n. 107.
[119] Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge, 1975), 32.

argued that the Outer Ocean was influenced by the lunar cycle, and that the Inner Sea in its turn moved in response to the Outer.[120] Perhaps more germane are that Posidonius, according to Strabo (2.2.1–3.8 = F 28), could divide the world into 'zones', measure the length of the inhabited world, and clearly think in terms of the unity of continents.[121] Posidonius' vision of the physical reality of the world, and therefore also its history, was universal in ways that put him into the same category of thinkers represented by Dicaearchus.

It remains to mention briefly Diodorus. Although not himself a historiographer of the first rank, nonetheless his work is vital for our understanding of Hellenistic historical writing insofar as it preserves much, or in some cases, virtually all we know of important historical minds of this period. He came from Agyrium in Sicily (Diod. 1.4.4), and is often referred to as Diodorus 'Siculus'—that is, 'the Sicilian'. His precise dates are not known, but inasmuch as he seems to have visited Egypt between 60 and 56 BC (the 180th Olympiad: see Diod. 1.46.7), his *floruit* can securely be placed in the middle years of the first century.[122] On the basis of internal testimony, it seems that Diodorus began writing his work in the late 40s, and originally planned to take his account down to 46/5, though he tells us in his introduction that he wound up concluding his narrative at another, earlier end-date.[123] In fact, Diodorus tells us a good deal about the composition of his work in this introduction: he says that it took him thirty years to write his history, that he travelled extensively during the researching of his work (Diod. 1.4.1), that he repaired to Rome for a long period of time where he completed his task (Diod. 1.4.2–3), and finally, that at the time of his writing of the introduction, the volumes of his history were still 'unpublished' (Diod. 1.4.6).[124] Diodorus reports that the first six books of his work cover events from 'before the Trojan War'; the next eleven from the Trojan War to the death of Alexander the Great; and the final twenty-three, events from that date (323 BC) down to the first year of the Gallic Wars (60/59 BC), though since he refers in the same section to the later deification of the murdered Julius Caesar (44 BC), he knows of events after that date (Diod. 1.4.6–7). It has been argued that Diodorus changed his original end-date of 46/5 because of the worsening political conditions at Rome after the assassination of Caesar, whom he clearly esteemed (cf. Diod. 32.27.3).[125] Not all are in agreement with this view, preferring instead to believe that Diodorus' main chronographic source simply gave out.[126] Diodorus' decision to treat myth and legend is particularly important, inasmuch

[120] Clarke, *Between Geography and History*, 189.   [121] Ibid., 139–52.

[122] Cf. Kenneth S. Sacks, *Diodorus Siculus and the First Century* (Princeton, 1990), 161.

[123] P. J. Stylianou, *A Historical Commentary on Diodorus Siculus Book 15* (Oxford, 1998), 18–21.

[124] Cf. C. Rubincam, 'The Organization and Composition of Diodorus' *Bibliotheke*', *Echos du Monde Classique/Classical Views*, 31 (1987), 324.

[125] Sacks, *Diodorus Siculus and the First Century*, 172–84.

[126] Stylianou, *A Historical Commentary on Diodorus Siculus Book 15*, 22.

as this put him at odds with the figure he took as his most important predecessor in writing universal history: namely, Ephorus (see esp. Diod. 4.1.3, and above). John Marincola has shown that Diodorus' procedure in treating mythical material was to provide both an 'original' and a 'rationalized' account.[127]

Diodorus called his work *Bibliotheke* [Library]. It is clear from the outset of the work that he considered himself to be working in the tradition of universal historians ('those who have treated systematically universal histories', Diod. 1.1.1). Of particular importance is what the title of his work reveals. In her magisterial study of Hieronymus of Cardia, whose historiography is known to us chiefly through Diodorus (see discussion above), Jane Hornblower has shown that the term *bibliotheke* normally means a place to put books—either a bookcase or a library—and is virtually unparalleled as a title for a work of history in antiquity.[128] The only parallel that can be adduced is telling: Photius' review of Classical and Byzantine authors called *Bibliotheke tou Photiou* or *Phiotiou Myriobiblion e Bibliotheke.* Diodorus' work, to judge by its title then, was by its own admission a *compilation* of earlier historical work. Hornblower demonstrates that this is clearly how ancient readers viewed the *Bibliotheke.* Pliny the Elder, for instance, groups Diodorus with other compilers of handbooks, indeed applauding him for the accuracy of his title. It was what it advertised itself to be: a collection of other historians' work (Pliny *N.H.* Praef. 25).

Perhaps the most important and revealing feature of the *Bibliotheke* was Diodorus' decision to move from a regionally oriented prehistory to an annalistic presentation of events from both the Roman and Greek worlds. Indeed, eventually, Diodorus was able to move to a year-by-year scheme, permitting him to date according to Athenian archon, Roman consuls, and Olympiad (see for example, Diod. 11.1.2 for the momentous year 480 BC). While he could continue his narrative of a specific event beyond his annalistic format (e.g. the later career of Themistocles, Diod. 11.54–59), and certain books can be dominated by a single individual (notably Book 17 and Alexander the Great), the overall impression provided by his dating system was of a single historiographic space where Greek and Roman affairs were integrated. Thus it can be safely argued that Diodorus most nearly achieved the 'universality' sought by the practitioners of this particular brand of historical writing. In fact, he even claims at the beginning of the *Bibliotheke* that he will attempt a history 'of the events of the entire world, as if of a single city' (Diod. 1.3.6): events conceived of as happening on the largest stage possible (the *kosmos*) will be so integrated together that they will seem to have occurred on the smallest stage (the *polis*).[129] Others have further speculated that he was enabled thereby to emphasize significant and recurring themes, such as

[127] John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge, 1997), 119–21.
[128] Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia*, 22.
[129] Cf. Rubincam, 'The Organization and Composition of Diodorus' *Bibliotheke*', 314.

the importance of benefactors, or the dangers of empire.[130] But such assumptions require Diodorus to have been more of an independent writer than many imagine him to have been.

LOCAL HISTORY

We will now shift from the macro-lens of universal history to the micro-lens of local history. Despite the change in scale, however, we shall see that many of the ideas that seem to animate universal history are also in play here. Before looking at local Greek historiography, however, it is important to take stock of how the modern treatment of it has developed. Our understanding of regional or city-centred Greek historiography is bound up with our knowledge of the best-known set of local historians: namely, the 'Atthidographers', the historians of Athens and its region, Attica. The study of these writers is, in turn, intimately connected to the scholarship that has grown up around the Aristotelian *Athenaion Politeia* [Constitution of Athens].[131] How modern scholars have understood the *Athenaion Politeia* and its sources has fundamentally shaped the modern study of Greek local history-writing.[132]

Another one of the spectacular early additions to the body of ancient texts that we owe to papyrology was the *Athenaion Politeia*, with the publications of it coming out in 1880 and 1891.[133] The great German classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, responsible as co-editor for one of the first editions of the treatise (1891), soon set about trying to account for the sources of this text, and found them in what he argued were the records of Athenian religious officials called the *exegetai* (the 'expounders'—of sacred law).[134] In his view, a 'pre-literary' type of local historiography could be traced back to the early years of the Athenian state. Wilamowitz's views were strongly countered by Jacoby in his book *Atthis* (1949). Jacoby showed that there was in fact no evidence to support the claim that records of the sort Wilamowitz argued for could be in any way associated with the *exegetai*. In particular, Jacoby found no reason to accept that an anonymous compiler of these records published a quasi-definitive chronicle of Athenian history, or *Atthis*, around the year 380, which thus permitted this knowledge to pass from a pre-literary to a literary form, and hence form the

[130] Sacks, *Diodorus Siculus and the First Century.*

[131] Often styled 'Aristotelian' because while it seems inspired by Aristotle, it is almost certainly not by him: P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford, 1981), 58–63.

[132] Cf. Phillip Harding, *Androtion and the Atthis* (Oxford, 1994), 48.

[133] See Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia*, 2–3; and Mortimer Chambers, *Aristoteles Athenaion Politeia* (Leipzig, 1986), p. v.

[134] Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Aristoteles und Athen*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1893), i. 260–90, esp. 280–8.

backbone to the information found in the *Athenaion Politeia*.¹³⁵ In his own conception, Jacoby believed that charting the history of Athens was profoundly political, and that the Atthidographers were part of a 'political war' that raged over how the Athenian state changed over time. Certain writers could be identified as pro-democratic, and others as pro-oligarchic.¹³⁶ Needless to say, in Jacoby's view, this made the writing of the history of Athens a much later development— a point that is in accord with his earlier views about the writing of Greek local history more generally as they were found in his epochal article of 1909 on the evolution of Greek historical writing. Local history or 'horography', as Jacoby called it, grew up in the aftermath of the Persian Wars, and in particular as a response to the history of Herodotus.¹³⁷

While Jacoby's specific criticisms of Wilamowitz may have been fair, they also helped to establish an orthodoxy about the later development of local history that seems not to be accurate. Several scholars have pointed to a section of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' treatise, *On Thucydides* 5, as 'crucial' testimony that counters Jacoby's view of the later appearance of local historiography.¹³⁸ In this passage, Dionysius reviews the writers who came before Thucydides, citing no less than twelve by name. For Dionysius, all these writers, though treating various topics, write 'with one and the same object in view, that of bringing to the attention of the public traditions preserved among the local people or written records preserved in sacred or profane archives, just as they had received them, without adding or subtracting anything' (Dion. *Thuc.* 5.3). This description of such a sort of historiographic activity makes it sound very much like these men were writing 'local history'. After characterizing these historians further as writers with modest ambitions who achieved modest results, Dionysius notes that Herodotus 'raised [their] choice of subject to a more ambitious and impressive level' (*Thuc.* 5.5),¹³⁹ implying that he too post-dated these authors and, what is more, wrote in a manner similar (if also superior) to what they did. On Dionysius' evidence, then, local historiography was practised not only before Thucydides, but also Herodotus.¹⁴⁰ Jacoby was wrong in his later dating of local historical writing.

Furthermore, in the particular case of the local historians of Athens, Jacoby's views have also been criticized for casting the Atthidographers too narrowly,

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¹³⁵ Jacoby, *Atthis*, esp. 3–8.
¹³⁶ Harding, *Androtion and the Atthis*, 47–8; P. J. Rhodes, 'The Atthidographers', in Verdin *et al.* (eds.), *Purposes of History*, 73–4; and Guido Schepens, 'Ancient Greek City Histories: Self-Definition through History Writing', in Kristoffel Demoen (ed.), *The Greek City from Antiquity to the Present: Historical Reality, Ideological Construction, Literary Representation* (Louvain, 2001), 14–15 and n. 30.
¹³⁷ Jacoby, 'Über die Entwicklung der griechischen Geschichtsschreibung und den Plan einer neuen Sammlung der griechischen Historikerfragmente', 109–18.
¹³⁸ Schepens, 'Ancient Greek City Histories', 15. See also his n. 31 for further bibliography.
¹³⁹ Translations from Robert L. Fowler, 'Herodotos and His Contemporaries', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 116 (1996), 63.
¹⁴⁰ See ibid.

as motivated chiefly by political biases that seem distinctly modern in conception,[141] and that in any case tend to obscure the individual character of what they severally wrote.[142] In what follows I will look first briefly at the Atthidographers, and then move on to local historians throughout the Greek world, especially as their activities are remembered and celebrated on stone in inscriptions.

The first Atthidographer—that is, the first historian to produce a work that could be styled an 'Atthis' or local history of Athens—was not in fact an Athenian at all, and predated the earliest native Atthidographer by at least a generation: Hellanicus of Lesbos (*FGrH* 4 + 323a: lived *c.*480–395). He wrote a number of studies on myth as history, several works of ethnography, an extremely important chronography, the *Priestesses of Argos*—the first of its kind, used by Thucydides[143]—and finally an *Attike Syngraphe* [Attic History]. This work comprised two books: the first dealt with mythical Athens, and the second, the historical period down (probably) to the end of the Peloponnesian War (the last date in the fragments is 407/6), organized by archon-year.[144] Two specific interrelated points are worth noting about this structure. First, that the mythical period received so much attention, and second, that the historical period received so little, and hence must have been very concise. In fact this is why we know the title of the work: Thucydides (1.97.2) criticizes Hellanicus by name for his brevity and lack of chronographic accuracy in his *Attike Syngraphe.*[145] That the mythical period received correspondingly equal attention to the historical suggests the great importance Hellanicus placed on this sort of material. Furthermore, he seemed to treat Athenian myth from a patriotic, local perspective. Thus, according to Hellanicus, the Panathenaic festival was held for the first time by the legendary king Erichthonius, son of the god Hephaestus (F 2; also asserted by Androtion *FGrH* 324 F 2), though in reality it was founded in the sixth century BC.[146] The most important state festival at Athens required a legendary founder, and thus an impeccable claim to great antiquity. This is the sort of argument that we shall see in several other city histories from the Hellenistic period.

To be sure we should probably not be surprised at this proportion of myth to history (to put the issue crudely), coming from a man who, elsewhere in his *oeuvre*, treated myth as history so much. But it is important for Atthidography

[141] Harding, *Androtion and the Atthis*, 16–17.

[142] Note esp. ibid., 49–50; and Rhodes, 'The Atthidographers'.

[143] Thuc. 2.2.1 and 4.133.3. In general, see A. Möller, 'The Beginnings of Chronography: Hellanicus' *Hiereiai*', in Nino Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus* (Oxford, 2001), 241–62.

[144] Jacoby, *FGrH*, III b *Text* Supp. 12–14; Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides*, i. 148; and Harding, *Androtion and the Atthis*, 9. *FGrH* 323a FF 25 and 26: Antigenes archon in 407/6.

[145] Cf. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides*, i. 148 ad loc.

[146] Harding, *Androtion and the Atthis*, 83–4.

and local history specifically, because the mythical period bulks so large in several of the later Atthidographers.[147] It looks as if Hellanicus was definitive in this regard, setting the standard for those who came after him. One more point needs to be made in connection with Hellanicus, and that is how he causes the Jacobian understanding of the development of Atthidography difficulties. Although the pioneer of the genre, he was neither an Athenian, nor did he flourish in the fourth century BC. Such a situation points to the overly schematic nature of Jacoby's views, and the problem of periodization more generally: not a Hellenistic writer, we essentially have to treat Hellanicus as one, even though he predated Thucydides!

The remaining Atthidographers, virtually all native Athenians,[148] can be dealt with in short order. To judge by the title of one of his works, Cleidemus (*FGrH* 323 FF 14–27) was in fact an exegete and historian who flourished circa 378–340.[149] Despite this fact, Wilamowitz did not make use of him in his attempt to connect the *exegetai* of Athens to the development of the Atthis in the fourth century.[150] Cleidemus' history of Athens was called *Protogonia*, not *Atthis*: 'protogonia' means 'first born' and probably alluded to the long-standing claim that the Athenians were not descended from immigrants to Attica but were autochthonous or from 'earth-born' people.[151] Like Hellanicus, Cleidemus dealt extensively with the mythical hero of Athens, Theseus, to judge by Plutarch; indeed, Plutarch notes (Plut. *Thes.* 27.3) that Cleidemus sought to be 'exact' in his treatment of Theseus' battle with the invading Amazons, giving details about the disposition of the battle lines, and providing the name of the Amazonian queen as Hippolyta (not Antiope).[152] As for later history, our latest datable fragment concerns dire omens at Delphi and elsewhere before the sailing of the Athenian fleet for Sicily in 415 (F 10 = Paus. 10.15.5–6).[153] While Jacoby was right to urge caution in interpreting this fragment, one does wonder how Cleidemus, a religious official himself, would have interpreted the episode: it was certainly a moment from the Athenian past treated by other authors as fraught with ominous and portentous happenings.[154] A late and garbled testimonium of the Latin Church Father Tertullian (Tert. *An.* 52 = T 2) declares that Cleidemus was publicly thanked by the Athenians for his historical writing and awarded a golden crown. If true, this notice would be extremely significant because, as will

[147] Cf. ibid., 8.

[148] The one exception is Ister (*FGrH* 334), whose exact place of birth is not known (Paphos? Cf. T 1), but who was later associated with Alexandria and Cyrene. In the tradition of Alexandrian scholarship, Ister in fact compiled an anthology of earlier *Atthides*.

[149] The work was entitled *Exegetikon*. See Jacoby, *Atthis*, 56; and Harding, *Androtion and the Atthis*, 10.

[150] Cf. ibid., 11.   [151] Jacoby, *Atthis*, 83.

[152] Cf. W. S. Barrett, *Euripides Hippolytos* (Oxford, 1964), 8–9 n. 3 and 437–8.

[153] Pausanias actually refers to the author as 'Cleitodemus', but this is assumed to be an error for Cleidemus.

[154] Thuc. 6.27.3, Ar. *Lys.* 390–97; cf. Plut. *Nic.* 13; Thuc. 8.1.1; Jacoby, *Atthis*, 267 n. 186.

be seen shortly, in the Hellenistic period local historians were not infrequently thanked officially by their home cities for writing native, patriotic histories. While it does seem that Athens officially honoured Herodotus already in the fifth century,[155] when Greek communities took public action towards historians, it was often to exile them (though seldom for what they wrote; see Androtion immediately below).[156] Cleidemus must be counted among the very first historians in the Greek world to earn the thanks of his city for his historiographic efforts.

The next Atthidographer of major importance was Androtion (*FGrH* 324), son of Andron, who flourished at the midpoint of the fourth century, and who wrote his *Atthis* perhaps a decade later. Unlike Cleidemus, whose career is not well known beyond his being an exegete (and remember, that is only a guess), both literary and documentary evidence show that Androtion was deeply involved in the politics of Athens in the fourth century—indeed Demosthenes' first forensic speech on a question of public interest was written for one Diodorus against Androtion in 355 (Dem. 22). A variety of testimony makes clear that he came from an important political family, was an orator, served on the Council of Athens (the Boule), was governor of a city on the island of Amorgos, moved decrees, and served as an ambassador in a political career that Demosthenes describes in 355 as having lasted thirty years (T 3a).[157] Indeed, since so much is known about Androtion's public life and, because of all the Atthidographers, the fragments of his *Atthis* seem closest to the historical view of Athens that we see in the first half of the Aristotelian *Athenaion Politeia* (though they are not very close),[158] it is not surprising that it was mainly Androtion who encouraged Jacoby to view the local histories of Athens as accounts, not only shaped, but also inspired by the political views of their authors,[159] and that of the Atthidographers it was Androtion furthermore whom Jacoby regarded as an important source for the *Athenaion Politeia* itself,[160] a view that is probably correct, but perhaps not to the extent Jacoby envisioned.[161] Politics and historiography combine in Androtion when we note that Plutarch in his essay *On Exile* mentions him as one of several historians (and one poet) who wrote their work while in exile; in Androtion's case, after taking up

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[155] Diyllus of Athens (*FGrH* 73) reports that Herodotus received from the Athenians the staggering sum of ten talents by public decree (F 3 = Plut. *Mor.* 862 B, *De Herod. Mal.* 26). According to the Byzantine chronicler George Syncellus (*Ecloga Chron.* 297 Mosshammer), Herodotus was 'thanked', literally 'honoured' (*sic*) for reading his books (*sic*) to the Athenians. See Felix Jacoby, 'Herodotos', in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Supplementband, 2 (1913), 226–9.

[156] Dillery, 'Exile'.

[157] For the details of this career: Harding, *Androtion and the Atthis*, 19–24.

[158] Cf. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia*, 21.

[159] Jacoby, *Atthis*, 74.　　　　　[160] Jacoby, *FGrH* III b *Text* Supp. 103; and id., *Atthis*, 156.

[161] For example, D. M. Lewis, 'Sources, Chronology, Method', *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 5 (Cambridge, 1992), 11; and Phillip Harding, *The Story of Attika: The Fragments of the Local Chronicles of Attika* (London/New York, 2008), 7.

residence in Megara (T 14). We do not know exactly why Androtion was banished, but it was most assuredly not because of his *Atthis*, for he evidently wrote it while in exile.

The career of Phanodemus (*FGrH* 325), like that of Androtion, can be partially reconstructed from inscriptions. He was clearly an important member of the group of statesmen surrounding the reform-minded leader of the Athenian government in the third quarter of the fourth century, Lycurgus of Butadae. Athenian culture can be said to have been codified in this period; for example, the philosopher Socrates was rehabilitated as a state hero (rather than criminal), and even a statue of him made, and the official copies of the three great tragedians, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, were made at this time, and statues of them were also put up at state expense. Both initiatives were apparently parts of the same legislative package by Lycurgus ([Plut.] *Mor.* 841F).[162] Phanodemus is found on several inscriptions from Athens, Oropus, and Delphi, all of which record his involvement in state cult.

It has long been recognized that Phanodemus' historical writing needs to be understood in the context of his career in Lycurgan Athens: as Jacoby has said, 'there seems to be no doubt that he wrote his *Atthis* in the spirit, and certainly in support, of the restoration policy', specifically in the area of 'religious reform and revitalization'.[163] Even though all the Atthidographers paid special attention to the mythical or legendary history of Athens, it can be safely said that, with Phanodemus, the attention this period received reached new levels. We do not know exactly how many books his *Atthis* contained, but we do know that by Book 9 he had only reached either the assassination of Hipparchus, the son of the tyrant Pisistratus, in 514, or more probably the creation of the ten tribes by Cleisthenes in 508/7 (F 8).[164] We also know from an unplaceable fragment that Phanodemus also dealt with the death of Cimon in 450/49 (F 23), and very likely beyond. Therefore we can deduce that Phanodemus' 'prehistory' of Athens must have been truly massive.[165]

The last Atthidographer was probably also the most important: Philochorus (*FGrH* 328).[166] We learn a great deal about him and his writings in the entry for him from the Suda (T 1): among other details, that he was a 'seer and an inspector of sacrificial victims' (*mantis* and *hieroskopos*); that he was a young man when the great scholar Eratosthenes was old (this is in fact wildly incorrect); and that he died when 'ambushed' by Antigonus Gonatas, having been accused of siding with Ptolemy II Philadelphus in the Chremonidean War

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[162] Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates*, 57–62, 43–57.

[163] Jacoby, *FGrH*, III b *Text* Supp. 173; second quote: Cynthia J. Schwenk, *Athens in the Age of Alexander: The Dated Laws and Decrees of the 'Lykourgan Era' 338–322 BC* (Chicago, 1985), 205.

[164] Jacoby, *FGrH*, III b *Text* Supp. 183.

[165] Cf. John Dillery, 'Greek Sacred History', *American Journal of Philology*, 126 (2005), 509 and nn. 19–21.

[166] Cf. Jacoby, *FGrH*, III b *Text* Supp. 220.

(267–61?). The Suda also lists his literary output: no fewer than twenty works.[167] Listed first is his *Atthis*, which contained seventeen books, and covered 'the deeds of the Athenians and kings and archons until the last Antigonus, called Theos'. We are also told that Philochorus' *Atthis* was written 'against Demon', presumably to counter Demon's *Atthis* (cf. *FGrH* 327). Like all the other *Atthides*, it was organized by archon year. As Jacoby was right to point out, as an *Atthis* is but one of several works by Philochorus, whereas only a couple of titles are attributable to the other Atthidographers, this suggests a very important fact about him: 'Ph[ilochorus] is the first scholar among the Atthidographers'; that is, 'he [was] a man of research who in numerous monographs systematically include[d] the whole domain of Attic history and Attic religious life in the widest sense of the word'.[168] The titles of his other works reveal that Philochorus had an interest in chronology (Athenian archons, Olympiads), documents (inscriptions of Attica), polemic (rebuttal of Demon, Dionysius?), literature (the poets Sophocles, Euripides, Alcman), and, most of all, religion and the cults of Athens and Attica.[169] Save for polemic, all these interests could be said to animate local Greek historical writing elsewhere in the Hellenistic period. Indeed, it is especially important to note the different types of text that show up as topics of interest to Philochorus. As is probably best seen in the case of the Chronicle of Lindos on Rhodes (99 BC), it was a major concern of local historiography in the Hellenistic period to preserve the past by building suites of interconnected materials: literary references, documents, chronography.[170]

The most striking feature of Philochorus' *Atthis* was its distinct favouring of contemporary and near-contemporary history. While Philochorus used only one book (Book 3) to go either from the first archon at Athens (Creon) in 684/3 BC, or perhaps the archonship of Solon (594/3), to the reforms of Ephialtes in 462/1, a period that included the reforms of Cleisthenes and the Persian Wars, and also only one book (Book 4) to cover the development of the Athenian Empire and the Peloponnesian War, he lavished eleven books on the last sixty years of Athens' history, indeed using more than half the total number of books of his *Atthis* to cover the last forty years (eight books).[171] Of his earliest history it can be said that Philochorus was both in line with what had been done before by the other Atthidographers, but also different. Thus it is clear that he dealt extensively with the first king of Athens, Cecrops (FF 93–98), but he also rationalized him, explaining his monstrous biform nature ('the two-form Cecrops') as a nickname,

[167] But according to Jacoby, *FGrH* III b *Text* Supp. 227 and 242, Philochorus actually wrote twenty-seven works.

[168] Jacoby, *FGrH*, III b *Text* Supp. 227–8.

[169] Robert Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History* (Oxford, 1996), 281; and Dillery, 'Greek Sacred History', 509 and n. 16.

[170] See esp. Carolyn Higbie, *The Lindian Chronicle and the Greek Creation of Their Past* (Oxford, 2003); and Robin Osborne in this volume.

[171] Jacoby, *FGrH*, III b *Text* Supp. 251–2; book divisions, 253–4.

either because of the length of his body or because he was Egyptian and knew the two languages (Egyptian and Greek [F 93]). Additionally, Cecrops became for Philochorus a culture-hero who introduced political organization (F 94), religion (F 97), and the making of weapons [F 98].[172] It also seems clear that Philochorus promoted an Athenocentric view of the mythical past, as Phanodemus had certainly done: thus Theseus is Heracles' contemporary and transfers to him rites that were once his (F 18).[173]

It is time I looked briefly at 'horography' outside of Athens. I cannot hope here to review comprehensively the work of the local historians of the Hellenistic period but will instead stress a few points by way of introduction, and then discuss a few representative figures.[174] Greek historiography was always in a sense 'local'. Herodotus could be said to have an Athenocentric view, and Thucydides himself argues that his exile from the same city helped him to escape from the difficulties posed by knowing only one side of the Peloponnesian War. A local and parochial perspective can even be detected in the most celebrated universal historians—remember that Ephorus wrote a work devoted solely to his native Cyme, or that Timaeus was faulted by Polybius for excessive Sicilian and West Greek bias. On the other hand, it needs also to be said that the great historical narratives of the Greek world all transcend regional interests and manage to conceive a world of meaningful historical action that is much bigger than any one place, region, or even culture. Thus, Herodotus announces in the Proem to his *Histories* that he is concerned with the deeds and events produced by both Greek and barbarian. Thucydides likewise believes that his subject—the Peloponnesian War—was the greatest disturbance ever to occur in *world* history, as he announces in the introduction to his work. And Polybius, for his part, avers that Roman power unified the entire Mediterranean basin. It is precisely in the area of scope that we can detect a big difference between the 'great' historians of the Greek tradition and horography.

But the local historian of the Hellenistic period did not set out to describe a small world, or to chart the past relating to a smaller piece of a larger world. Rather, the world of significant human enterprise—be it war, diplomacy, cultural achievement, religious life—was thought to be bounded by the city and region of the local historian. If something of historical importance happened elsewhere, for it to be included in a work of local history, it had to be related in some way to the *polis* and *chora* of the local historian. Furthermore, local historiography was invariably also 'committed' or 'engaged' history, in the sense that it was created in order to perform a very defined role in the political life of the city and

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[172] Harding, *The Story of Athens*, 22–3.

[173] Katherine Clarke, *Making Time for the Past: Local History and the Polis* (Oxford, 2008), 199 and n. 130.

[174] For what follows, fundamental is Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften*.

its region. Hans-Joachim Gehrke has styled this type of historical writing 'intentional history': a treatment of the past that combines myth and history, and that contains 'elements of subjected and conscious self categorization', constructed so as to assist a city and its region to establish itself as an important locality in the wider 'inhabited world'—the *oikoumene*.[175] Typical of this brand of historical writing was the impulse to collect disparate materials—for example, documents, letters, stories, historical narratives—and to compile them and bring them into order. The local historian did not really create an historical narrative by doing original research so much as by putting together pre-existing materials.[176] Relatedly, as historiography became focused on regional advocacy, so the use of historical writing in international politics and diplomacy became commonplace in the Hellensitic period: when the city of Priene had a dispute with nearby Samos over the ownership of some borderland, histories, among other 'testimony', were used to advance the city's claims (*Inschriften von Priene* 37, line 12), including by Theopompus (*I. Priene* 38, line 121).[177] The local historian as antiquarian–compiler, with an aggressively local (parochial?) view. We are not that far from Polybius' critique of Timaeus (see above)!

A particularly good portrait of an historian practising 'intentional history', though unfortunately without a name due to the poor preservation of the text, comes from a third-century inscription from Amphipolis in the Thracian Chersonnese:

> while resident [here?
> and educating well [
> he examined and brought [together the things
> written up about our city in the ancient historians [and poets
> and held public-lectures about them [. . . in which
> he also had won distinction, and he compiled [a book
> also regarding the goddess (Artemis) Tauropolos . . .[178]

Several points are worth drawing out here. It is important, whether or not a native son,[179] that the historian be resident in the city that is both the subject of the history and the community honouring the historian. Note, further, that this man, in some specific or more general sense, 'educates' through his endeavours there.

But perhaps most illuminating is the description of the historian's research activity and the publication of his work. First he examined historical and

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[175] Hans-Joachim Gehrke, 'Myth, History, and Collective Identity: Uses of the Past in Ancient Greece and Beyond', in Luraghi (ed.), *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*, 298–9.

[176] Jean-Marie Bertrand, *Inscriptions Historiques Grecques* (Paris, 1992), 25–6.

[177] Sheila L. Ager, *Interstate Arbitrations in the Greek World, 337–90 BC* (Berkeley, 1996), nos. 26 and 74.

[178] Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften,* E 6 = *Bulletin Épigraphique* 1979.271; *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 28.534.

[179] See Dillery, 'Greek Sacred History', 521 n. 63.

(possibly) poetic texts concerning Amphipolis; ones that are described as ancient, and then 'brought them together'. He then held public lectures or recitations of his findings, perhaps several; and finally (?) he composed a book about the tutelary deity of Amphipolis, Artemis Tauropolos. It is admittedly difficult to tell the relationship between the historian's lectures and this volume on Artemis, as the text seems to suggest that the compilation of the book was something done in addition to the public lectures, and therefore perhaps on a different topic— though other parallel texts suggest one and the same topic for both.

Hallmarks of a distinctly Hellenistic orientation are evident in the historian's efforts and methods: the research is text based, not from autopsy, and it required examination and arrangement of what were thought to be the oldest and therefore no doubt the most authoritative writings. Here is what Jean-Marie Bertrand has called the 'confrontation of sources'—a profoundly Hellenistic phenomenon.[180] It helps to account for the mania for collecting, and further, despite the language implying sorting and choosing material carefully, the accumulation of a kind of hotchpotch of materials that are thought to mutually reinforce each other. The past is not preserved by the authoritative reasoning and original research of the historian, but through his careful and laborious handling of already written materials—his work is chiefly archival. The 'facts' of his history are already out there: they just need organization and presentation.

Indeed, while argument will continue to rage concerning the 'publication' or even 'performance' of Herodotus' text, not to mention the possible venues of transmission for the work of Thucydides and Xenophon, our text from Amphipolis makes clear that some at least of the work was heard as 'public lectures' in the city.[181] It is perhaps in this regard that we see best the 'intentional historical' aspect of this kind of historiography. One can just imagine the Amphipolitans gathered at a suitable place (there was a temple to Clio there!) to hear their own history told to them, or rather retold; much that was familiar no doubt, but some perhaps not. Although only founded relatively recently (in 437/36), writings from the 'ancient' historians and poets furnished the material for our historian. These recitations constituted the articulation of the Amphipolitans' understanding of themselves and their historical importance in the world. The historian won fame for himself,[182] and the thanks of the people—a reciprocal relationship, in other words, of mutual benefit. The historian produced a history of Amphipolis that the Amphipolitans themselves thought brought credit to their polis. It was for this history that the historian was thanked.

If we had more of this inscription we would doubtless be able to learn more about the book that the historian also 'compiled' about Artemis Tauropolos.

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[180] Bertrand, *Inscriptions Historiques Grecques*, 25–6.
[181] On public recitations, see esp. Louis Robert, *Hellenica: Receuil d'Épigraphie de Numismatique e d'Antiquités Grecques*, vol. 2. (Paris, 1946), 35–6.
[182] See parallels at Jeanne Robert and Louis Robert, *Bulletin Épigraphique*, 1958.336.

Another third-century inscription, similar to the text from Amphipolis, makes even clearer the connection of the local god to the historian's research. In it one Syriscus, son of Heracleidas, from Chersonesos on the Black Sea, is thanked for his local history:

Heracleidas son of Parmenon proposed: since Syriscus son of Heracleidas, having carefully written up the epiphanies of the Maiden and read them out, and set out in detail the matters relating to the kings of the Bosporus, and recorded generously for the people (of Chersonesos) their existing friendly relations towards the cities, in order that (the people of Chersonesos) receive suitable honours, it has seemed best to the Council and the people to praise him for these things and for the magistrates to crown him with a golden crown on the 21st of Dionysia (?)....[183]

In many ways this is a model text for illustrating 'intentional history' and the historians who wrote it. Again it is hard to make out from the inscription whether Syriscus wrote a number of works, or only one that is being described in different ways. But, even on a minimal interpretation that assumes that the different subject types represent different works, Syriscus' whole *oeuvre* is being celebrated together in the text, and his authorship of them recognized and thanked. For a start, he wrote an *Epiphanies of the Maiden*—a work that probably looked much like the epiphanies section of the famous Lindos Chronicle. Appearances of the local tutelary god during times of crisis in the city's past are narrated, and connections to the cult of the god are stressed—dedications, that is, that commemorate the epiphany, and the individuals who made offerings at the shrine of the deity.[184] Often the dedications were in fact booty taken in war, and thereby helped to keep previous victories in the 'cultural memory' of the community at Lindos.[185] What exactly 'the matters relating to the kings of the Bosporus' and 'the existing benefactions towards the cities' were is not as clear. It has been plausibly argued that what is being alluded to in these phrases is the diplomatic network set up by Chersonesos with its neighbours to help meet the threat of barbarian attack in the second half of the third century.[186]

But the larger point to register is that Syriscus' historiography was written, not only to 'set out in detail' Chersonesos' place in the Pontus region, but was also meant to ensure that his community receive 'suitable honours': that its role in helping to manage the N. Pontus region be recognized and appreciated. This most certainly was 'intentional history': historical writing that was profoundly

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[183] *Inscriptiones Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Eoxini* I 184 = *IOSPE* I² 344, *FGrH* 807 T 1, Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften*, E 7.

[184] The similarity between Syriscus and the Lindos Chronicle was first pointed out by M. Rostovtzeff, 'ἐπιφάνειαι', *Klio*, 16 (1920), 203–6.

[185] Angelos Chaniotis, *War in the Hellenistic World* (Oxford, 2005), 222–3, 234–5.

[186] Jurij G. Vindogradov, *Pontische Studien: Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte und Epigraphik des Schwarzmeerraumes* (Mainz, 1997), 56, 95. Cf. S. J. Saprykin, *Heracleia Pontica and Tauric Chersonesus before Roman Domination* (Amsterdam, 1997), 217 and 227.

engaged with the task of regional advocacy. And note, again, that Syriscus' history was in fact communicated to the world by him through recitation: he literally 'read it out'. Further, at least as regards the Epiphanies of the Maiden, composing it was a task that required great effort on Syriscus' part—note his 'love of industry'. While the concept of 'toil' or 'effort' is not at all alien to the historiographic enterprise of the great historians of the Greek tradition[187]— Thucydides speaks in his programmatic statement from Book I of tracking down the facts of history 'with toil' (Thuc. 1.22.3)—the virtue that is signalled almost without fail in the inscriptions relating to 'intentional history' is precisely the effort it took to compile the history in question: not, it should be noted, accuracy, or truthfulness, or a unique perspective, that is, the very things that distinguish Thucydides' work as he describes it. Just as with the historian of Amphipolis, the sense one begins to get from the Chersonesos decree is that Syriscus' main task was archival—one of examining, sorting, and then compiling sources. The effort expended by Syriscus' great forebears in historiography more often than not had to do with autopsy (including Thucydides' statement above): the historian bragged about the effort and the time it took to check some fact, or pursue a lead. This was primary research, not collecting already treated material. We have to imagine a Greek world in the Hellenistic period populated by myriad local historians like Syriscus.

NON-GREEK NATIONAL HISTORIES IN THE GREEK LANGUAGE

Within a few years of the conquests by Alexander the Great, and roughly contemporary with the latter Atthidographers and other local historians of the Greek world, non-Greeks in the lands conquered by Alexander began to write histories of their nations' pasts in the Greek language.[188] In a sense, these works shared the same goals as the local histories that were being produced at the same time in the Greek world: regional advocacy. Obviously, these historians in particular raise the question of how quickly, and to what extent, Greek historiographic principles spread to non-Greeks, and the related issue of the survival and propagation of non-Greek views of the past in the face of Hellenization and Macedonian conquest.

As we have seen in virtually every subfield of Hellenistic historiography, the lineage of non-Greek historical writing in the Greek language can in fact be traced back into the Classical period, to a figure roughly contemporary with

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[187] See esp. Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography*, 72, 148–57.
[188] For this section, consult John Dillery, 'Quintus Fabius Pictor and Greco-Roman Historiography at Rome', in John F. Miller, Cynthia Damon, and K. Sara Myers (eds.), *Vertis in Usum: Studies in Honor of Edward Courtney* (Leipzig, 2002), 1–23; and Dillery, 'Greek Historians of the Near East: Clio's "Other" Sons', in Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, i. 221–30.

Herodotus (mid fifth century BC): Xanthus the Lydian (*FGrH* 765). Although the Suda claims (T 1) that he was born at the time of the Persian capture of the Lydian capital (Sardis) in 546/45, this is no doubt due to the fact that Xanthus dealt with this watershed event in his four-book national history, the *Lydiaca* [Lydian Matters].[189] One of the more illuminating pieces of information we have about Xanthus and his works comes to us by way of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. While Greek authorities found Greek antecedents for originators of the Etruscan people (Tyrrhenoi) via Lydia—namely 'Tyrrhenus' son of Heracles and the Lydian queen Omphale—Xanthus differed:

But Xanthus of Lydia, who was as well acquainted with ancient history as any man and who may be regarded as an authority second to none on the history of his own country, neither names Tyrrhenus in any part of his history as a ruler of the Lydians nor knows anything of the landing of a colony of Maeonians in Italy; nor does he make the least mention of Tyrrhenia as a Lydian colony, though he takes notice of several things of less importance. He says that Lydus and Torebus were the sons of Atys; that they, having divided the kingdom they had inherited from their father, both remained in Asia, and from them the nations over which they reigned received their names. His words are these: 'From Lydus are sprung the Lydians, and from Torebus the Torebians. There is little difference in their language and even now each nation scoffs at many words used by the other, even as do the Ionians and Dorians' (D.H. *A.R.* 1.28.2 = T 8 + F 16).[190]

What is so important about this passage is how it brings up many details that are central to the later Hellenistic era national histories written in Greek by non-Greeks. Xanthus is an authority on 'ancient history', presumably, history that falls outside of Greek time-reckoning systems and that predates benchmark episodes from Greek myth and legend. Further, he is an author of what is described explicitly as 'national history', for which his authority as a knowledgeable source is thought to be second to none.[191] Finally, while Xanthus' work is in Greek, and he even shows an awareness of linguistic difference among the Greeks themselves (note his remark about Ionians and Dorians), his understanding of the early history of Lydia is at odds with Greek views. Indeed, Dionysius will go on in his own account to contrast Xanthus' views on early history with Hellanicus' and Herodotus' (*A.R.* 1.28.3–4, 29.3). We do not know Xanthus' dates with precision, but he is thought to have written before Herodotus,[192] and hence cannot be thought to be objecting to anything Herodotus wrote. Be that as it may, it is very clear that Xanthus provided a very different accounting of

[189] T. S. Brown, 'Aristodicus of Cyme and the Branchidae', *American Journal of Philology*, 99 (1978), 69 n. 20.

[190] Cary translation (Loeb).

[191] Cf. Lionel Pearson, *Early Ionian Historians* (Oxford, 1939), 120.

[192] Indeed, Ephorus claimed (*FGrH* 70 F 180) that Xanthus gave Herodotus his 'starting-point': Pearson, *Early Ionian Historians*, 109, 116; and Oswyn Murray, 'The Ionian Revolt', in *The Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 4: *Persia, Greece and the Western Mediterranean* c.*525–479 B.C.* (Cambridge, 1988), 466.

significant events from his nation's past from what we see in later Greek authors.[193] But, that said, his early history seems also to contain both Near Eastern and Greek legendary material: his story of the restoration from the dead of a figure named Tylo, bitten by a deadly snake (F 3), looks back to the miraculous life-giving plant of the Near East (the Epic of Gilgamesh); but the account of the cannibal king of Lydia, Cambles, who eats his own wife (F 18) has been linked to Dionysiac worship from the Greek world.[194] As we shall see shortly, early history is precisely where the later Hellenistic non-Greek historians take on Greek views of their own nations' past and replace them with native accounts.

With Xanthus, then, we can see a clear antecedent in the Classical period for the non-Greeks who write national history in the Greek language at the beginning of the Hellenistic period. The impetus to write these histories in the years following Alexander the Great's death came from Greek writers who were closer in time who wrote on the barbarian world: Herodotus of course, but also men like Ctesias of Cnidus (late fifth–early fourth centuries BC), who lived at the Achaemenid court and wrote a history of Persia,[195] and especially Hecataeus of Abdera (*FGrH* 264). Indeed, it has plausibly been argued that Hecataeus of Abdera established with his own history of Egypt (*Aegyptiaca*) the essential structure of the later non-Greek histories written in the Greek language: a 'prehistory' or cosmogony/theology; a section devoted to geography; famous rulers; and the customs of the land.[196]

The testimony concerning Hecataeus provides us with tantalizing pieces of information, but is otherwise sketchy and even, at times, contradictory. Some ancient authorities speak of him as an 'Abderite'; others say that he came from Teos. It is claimed that he received a philosophical training from the sceptic Pyrrho (T 3a). In several important ways his thinking can be anticipated in the work of another man of Abdera, namely Democritus, especially as regards the earliest periods of human history, rejecting the classic 'descent' model from a Golden Age, and preferring instead a 'progress' model.[197] Indeed, Hecataeus developed views about earliest history that can be styled 'euhemerist': the belief that at least some early heroic king figures (here the pharaohs), later became divinized and made into gods (F 25).

Other testimonia offer us a picture of a Greek man of learning who came to Egypt and wrote a history of Egyptian civilization. Inasmuch as Hecataeus flourished under Alexander the Great and then was obviously resident in Egypt under Ptolemy, it is tempting to see Hecataeus as an older contemporary of the

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[193] Cf. Emilio Gabba, *Dionysius and the History of Archaic Rome* (Berkeley, 1991), 112.

[194] M. Flusin, 'Deux legends de l'ancienne Lydie d'après Xanthos le Lydien', *Revue Historique*, 256 (1976), 3–13.

[195] Dominique Lenfant, *Ctésias de Cnide* (Paris, 2004).

[196] Oswyn Murray, 'Hecataeus of Abdera and Pharaonic Kingship', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 56 (1970), 167; and id., 'Herodotus and Hellenistic Culture', 207.

[197] Cole, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology*, 159–60 and n. 35.

king, indeed writing when he was still 'Ptolemy son of Lagus'—that is, still satrap of Egypt, and not king. The precise date of Hecataeus' *Aegyptiaca* is not known,[198] but it is arguably the case that Hecataeus was the first truly Hellenistic writer, 'the first author to write for and under the patronage of one of the Diadochoi'.[199] Obviously Hecataeus travelled extensively in Egypt, making it as far south as Thebes; his description of the Ramesseum in particular suggests autopsy of the place (F 25).[200] In addition to his date and area of writing, both Diodorus and Josephus connect Hecataeus to Ptolemy, and Josephus adds that he was not only a man of letters, but was also a particularly important man of affairs. He was, in other words, one of Ptolemy's more important *philoi*.

This is not the place to examine in detail the fragments of Hecataeus' historical writing. But it does bear pointing out here that he is an ideal candidate for one of the main channels for the dissemination of ideas concerning Greek historiographic practices to the non-Greek native elite of Egypt—men such as Manetho. In the fragments that come to us by way of Diodorus, Hecataeus often refers to communicating directly with Egyptian priests; indeed, several sections in indirect speech are preserved, presumably representing the statements of Egyptian priests made to Hecataeus.[201] What is more, he clearly set himself up as a critic of Herodotus,[202] seeing himself as correcting the older historian's treatment of Egypt from a greater command of native sources, and providing his history with a clearer organization than Herodotus' sometimes wandering account (F 25). Clearly Hecataeus was deeply knowledgeable about Herodotus' history of Egypt, and could provide a model to others, including hellenophone Egyptian priests, of how to go about correcting, expanding, or otherwise improving upon Herodotus' work. Perhaps most crucially, Hecataeus seems to have successfully combined a (perhaps crude) king list with narrative, certainly more successfully than had Herodotus, who notoriously put the pyramid-building pharaohs in the wrong place (cf. Hdt. 2.124–34).[203] Whether or not Hecataeus in fact materially improved Greek knowledge regarding Egypt on the basis of native information, his activities in Egypt, conceived of as a riposte to Herodotus, would have been a powerful stimulus to others.

It is best to examine together the two non-Greeks who attempted the first national histories in Greek in the Hellenistic period. Berossus of Babylon (*FGrH*

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[198] Dating: P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1972), i. 496; Murray, 'Hecataeus of Abdera and Pharaonic Kingship', 143; id., 'Herodotus and Hellenistic Culture', 207; and id, 'Hecataeus of Abdera and Theophrastus on Jews and Egyptians', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 59 (1973), 159–68.

[199] Murray, 'Herodotus and Hellenistic Culture', 207.

[200] Stanley M. Burstein, 'Hecataeus of Abdera's History of Egypt', in Janet Johnson (ed.), *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond* (Chicago, 1992), 46, and the bibliography cited there.

[201] Murray, 'Hecataeus of Abdera and Pharaonic Kingship', 151.

[202] Id., 'Herodotus and Hellenistic Culture', 207.

[203] Cf. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II*, i. 93–5, 185–9.

680) and Manetho of Sebennytus in Egypt (*FGrH* 609) were both priests, and were clearly closely connected to the ruling courts of the new dynasts of their lands—the Seleucids and Ptolemies respectively. They both wrote histories of their civilization's past in Greek in the first quarter of the third century BC—Berossus a bit earlier (around 280), and Manetho, a bit later. That they were also both priests is a detail of great significance. In both Babylon and Egypt, priests played an important role in helping to establish foreign rule, as they had in the Achaemenid period. On the other hand, though, the Babylonian and Egyptian priests were not merely native elites who had been co-opted by the new rulers of their lands to help facilitate non-native rule: they had their own interests—typically the maintenance of local cult and their own status—that insured that they also viewed their task as being advocates of their own cultures, chiefly by acting as the guarantors of legitimacy for their new overlords.[204]

Both Berossus and Manetho divided their histories into a mere three books—a remarkable feat, given the historical span of both the Babylonian and Egyptian civilizations. Crucially, each had at his disposal king lists that extended back in time to the earliest periods—traditions of time reckoning that themselves were extremely old in both Babylonia and Egypt.[205] Hence, both Berossus and Manetho could push the historical horizon well before history 'started' for the Greeks—a point that was not lost on their most important reader and transmitter of their fragments: the later Jewish historian Josephus.[206] Josephus made it a point in his great treatise on historiography, the *Against Apion*, to point out (*Ap.* 1.6–8) 'that one would find that everything in the Greek world happened recently—yesterday or the day before'. But though both Berossus and Manetho had extremely old chronographic systems to work with, they both were innovative in terms of their own cultures' scholarly conventions when it came to constructing lists. Berossus incorporated lists of ancient sages in his listing of kings, included pre-Flood kings, and made Babylon an antediluvian city; Manetho made his list of pharaohs complete, including in his chronicle rulers that were omitted in other lists because they were viewed for one reason or another as illegitimate, and he also included synchronisms with the Greek past. While the king list helps to align both Berossus and Manetho with their national traditions of controlling the past, they also broke new ground in the making of their lists for reasons that were specific to their own time and situations. Berossus wanted to privilege the wisdom traditions of the Near East, and furthermore wanted to emphasize his native Babylon; Manetho, for his part, wanted to present a truly comprehensive view of kingship in Egypt, as well as to establish

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[204] Cf. Dillery, 'Greek Historians of the Near East', 228–30.

[205] The Sumerian King List for Mesopotamia and the Palermo Stone for Egypt both date to the third millennium BC.

[206] Cf. Tessa Rajak, 'Josephus and the "Archaeology" of the Jews', in ead., *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome* (Leiden, 2001), 241–55. See also Jonathan Price in this volume.

linkages between the Egyptian and Greek pasts—linkages that established Egypt's priority in time as well as its place as a source for important figures of Greek legend. The presence of new, non-native rulers in their lands accounts for the innovation in both cases.

Perhaps the most important feature of both Berossus' *Babyloniaca* and Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* is the incorporation of traditional narratives into the chronographic frame. In Berossus, a legendary fish-man sage named Oannes (= U'an Adapa) comes out of the 'Red Sea' (the Persian Gulf), supplies the earliest humans with the arts of civilization, but also tells them the story of Creation in a form very like the Enuma Elish or Babylonian genesis account (*FGrH* 680 F 1; cf. *ANET*[3] 60–72, 501–3)—and all this in the 'First Year', before even a king has been named. Berossus also presents the story of the Flood, and employs the Sumerian name for his flood hero (Xisouthros = Sum. Ziusudra), not the more common and later names, Atrahasis or Utnapishtim (F 4; cf. *ANET*[3] 104–9, 512–14).[207] Similarly, in several lengthy fragments that come to us by way of Josephus, Manetho recounts the story of the Hyksos invasion of Egypt, presenting details that are taken by Josephus to be connected to the biblical story of the Egyptian Captivity and the Exodus of the Israelites (*FGrH* FF 8–10a = Jos. *Ap.* 1.72–105, 223–253).

The Creation and Flood were of course central myths in Mesopotamia and helped to explain the ordering of the world. Indeed, in Berossus' account, all knowledge was transacted in Oannes' teaching to earliest humanity, 'and from that time nothing else has been discovered'. Furthermore, Berossus is careful to suggest in his history how this antediluvian wisdom survived the Flood and so made its way ultimately to his own writing—a 'tracing' of source that was a common scholarly convention in the Near East.[208] By implication, Greek knowledge, and even the Macedonian power that stood behind it, were shown to be insignificant beside the almost timeless and permanent glory of ancient Babylonia. For his part, Manetho's story of the Hyksos invasion was but a later iteration of a legend that was at the core of 'the Egyptian worldview'—it helped to define legitimate and illegitimate rule and even the basic 'structure of society' in Egypt.[209] When the rightful king ruled in Egypt, Ma'at, or the proper ordering of the cosmos, which included the all-important annual inundation of the Nile, was guaranteed; when the king was not the legitimate heir of the gods, then chaos would descend upon the land. The Hyksos came to be the models for illegitimate rule, and hence any of Egypt's foreign masters could be so described. That Manetho wrote up a detailed account of the Hyksos in the early years of Ptolemaic rule is powerfully suggestive: if the new kings proved to be good

[207] James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3rd edn, Princeton, 1969).

[208] Dillery, 'Greek Historians of the Near East', 223.

[209] Jan Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs*, trans. Andrew Jenkins (New York, 2002), 197–8, 399.

listeners to the native clergy of Egypt, and learned how to be true pharaohs, all would be well; but if not, then they would prove to be only the latest version of the Hyksos.

Indeed, much controversy has surrounded the interpretation of Berossus and Manetho. Were they merely collaborators who wrote up ancient equivalents of 'area studies' that helped the new rulers of their lands learn how to rule? Or were they, on the contrary, passionate advocates of their nations' pasts, whose views were like those to be found in nationalist prophetic texts, such as the Dynastic Prophecy in the case of Berossus, or for Manetho, the Oracle of the Potter?[210] In this sense, the histories of both Berossus and Manetho could be seen as what Jonathan Z. Smith has termed 'proto-apocalyptic'.[211]

It is certainly the case that an earlier, Greek contemporary of both Berossus and Manetho, Megasthenes (*FGrH* 715), wrote a history of India that seems to have been aimed at discouraging a Seleucid attempt to conquer the empire of Chandragupta, on the grounds that it was too powerful.[212] Berossus' and Manetho's lasting achievement was to open up the possibility, through their taking up of the Greek language and their engagement of Greek historiography, of a larger discussion taking place among the peoples of the Mediterranean basin and beyond about the human past. This is certainly how Josephus, himself a priest-historian writing in Greek during the foreign domination of his nation, viewed them. Historians whose first language was not Greek would go on to write native histories throughout antiquity—perhaps most notably, the earliest Roman historians of Rome.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

(All dates BC)

323	Death of Alexander the Great
320	Meeting of Alexander's generals at Triparadeisus; Alexander's empire divided
305	Generals of Alexander assume royal titles over their kingdoms
305–168	Antigonid kingdom of Greece and Macedonia
305–64	Seleucid kingdom of Asia
305–30	Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt
301	Battle of Ipsus: reunification of Alexander's empire now impossible

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[210] Cf. Samuel K. Eddy, *The King is Dead: Studies in the Near Eastern Resistance to Hellenism*, 334–31 BC (Lincoln, 1961).

[211] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (1978; rept. edn, Chicago, 1993), 67–87, esp. 79.

[212] Susan Sherwin-White and Amelie Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis: A New Approach to the Seleucid Empire* (Berkeley, 1993), 93–7.

197   Battle of Cynoscephalae: beginning of Roman suzerainty in Balkan Peninsula, though Macedonia does not become a Roman province until 148

146   Roman sack of Corinth; no regions independent of Roman power remain in Greece

133   Asian kingdom of Pergamum bequeathed in will of Attalus III to Rome

31   Battle of Actium; last of Successor kingdoms (the Ptolemaic) falls to Roman dominion

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Chapter 9

Josephus

Jonathan J. Price

It would be difficult to find another writer in Graeco-Roman antiquity such as Flavius Josephus who learned two separate, independent historiographical traditions—in Josephus' case, Greek and biblical—and combined them into unitary works of history. This chapter is not a general introduction to Josephus or a survey of his works, but an assessment of his place in the Graeco-Roman and biblical or Jewish historiographical traditions. As a Jewish priest, self-styled prophet, and self-appointed explicator and defender of Judaism, he wrote and rewrote in Greek a grand historical narrative from biblical times to his day, using Greek literary models and a biblical conception of the direction and purpose of history. As a Greek historian of the Roman Empire recounting central events in Roman history, he wrote in direct and open imitation of Thucydides, declared rigorous adherence to objective truth, quoted numerous classical authors, assiduously sought out sources, adopted Greek rhetorical techniques and historiographical *topoi*, paid homage to a Greek idea of *tyche* (Fortune) in historical processes, and translated Jewish concepts and phenomena into Greek and Roman terms. Yet in his conception of the historical process, the meaning of the past and its connection to the present, and the role of the divine in human history, he remained deeply rooted in his Jewish origins. In trying to satisfy, persuade, and educate different audiences with sometimes contradictory needs, and in trying to hammer vast, multifarious material into a coherent narrative, Josephus discovered ingenious solutions, and sometimes failed. He was well aware of the differences between Greek and Jewish historiographical traditions, and even discussed the problem openly. As a Jewish historian, Josephus reflects the currents of Jewish debate and thought of his day on the existential questions preoccupying Jews. As a Roman historian, Josephus reflects, at one and the same time, the view of Rome from the provinces, and from Rome itself where he wrote all his books.

A HISTORIAN'S LIFE

Flavius Josephus lived in a momentous century, and in his life witnessed the most important historical events of that century. He was in Jerusalem when the Jewish temple was destroyed and Judaism became permanently transformed

from a temple-centred cult to a synagogue-based religion. He witnessed the growth of messianic movements, including the first and second generations of Christians after Jesus' death, and the fate of those movements after the temple's destruction. He was in Vespasian's military camp when the first dynasty of the Roman principate, the Julio-Claudians, came to an end and Vespasian was called to Italy to found the second dynasty, and he was in Rome during the entire twenty-six years of Flavian rule and witnessed its end and the rise of the third dynasty of Roman princes.

The vicissitudes of Josephus' life explain much about his historical writing: his subjects, his methodology, his language and historiographical models, his philosophical/theological outlook, and his intended audiences. It is true that in the *circa* 150 years of Josephan scholarship, the details of Josephus' life have been over-used deterministically to explain everything he wrote—down to the level of individual sentences and word-choices, not to mention narrative episodes and entire works—as deriving from some apologetic or otherwise personal aim (and often the charge has been incompetence). Such a tendency among Josephan scholars can become tedious and even unfair, but it is not *prima facie* illegitimate, since Josephus himself draws attention to his own background and the course of his life in defending his credentials as historian and explaining the purpose and content of his writings.

In comparison to other historians of Greece and Rome, the details of Josephus' life are fairly well known, even if all useful information about him comes from his writings; he does not seem to have been well noticed in his lifetime. The excellent state of preservation of his writings is also unusual: his entire Greek *oeuvre* has come down to us in multiple manuscript traditions, thanks mainly to the Christian scholars who lovingly preserved every word he wrote as confirmation of their own historical and theological claims.

In the first sentence of his first published work in Greek, the *Bellum Judaicum* (*BJ*), Josephus introduced himself to the Graeco-Roman reading public. The sentence is quite revealing, and we shall return to it often in this essay:

Since [of the historians of] the war of the Jews against the Romans—the greatest war not only of our times but also of nearly all those we have heard about which have broken out between cities or between nations—some, not being present at the events, but collecting random and contradictory stories, wrote up their narratives in a rhetorical (sophistic) manner, others were there but, either out of flattery of the Romans or from hatred towards the Jews, have falsified the facts, and since these compositions of theirs exhibit in some places obloquy in other places encomium, but nowhere historical accuracy, I have set myself the task of presenting a narrative to the inhabitants of the Roman empire in the Greek language, translating the account I previously composed in my native language and sent up to the *barbaroi*—I, Josephus the son of Mathias, a priest from Jerusalem, having myself fought the Romans at first and then later perforce being present at the events   (*BJ* 1.1).

Here we learn, first, that Josephus was born as Yosef ben Mattitiyahu into a priestly family of Jerusalem. Later, in his autobiography, written about twenty-five years later, near the end of his life, he made the significance of his priestly status clear: 'Whereas different races base their claim to nobility (*eugeneia*) on various grounds, with us a connection with the priesthood is the hallmark of an illustrious line', and he goes on to say that his family belonged to the first of the twenty-four priestly courses, which was 'a peculiar distinction' (*Vita* 1).[1] His lineage was indeed distinguished: he was connected through his mother to the Hasmonean (Maccabean) line, his great-great grandfather having married the daughter of Jonathan the Hasmonean, the first of that line to attain the high-priesthood (*Vita* 3–5).[2] Josephus relates further (7–12) that he was given a thorough Jewish education, and as a child distinguished himself as somewhat of a prodigy, mastering essential texts and traditions so that he was consulted on points of law by 'the high priests and leaders of the city'. Even allowing for exaggeration, it can be assumed that Josephus' education was centred on the Bible, especially the written Torah and the oral law and biblical exegeses developing at the time; as a priest, he would have had especially thorough training in the laws and rituals pertaining to Temple procedures. Josephus rounded out his education at the age of 16 when, he says, he quickly passed through instruction in all three major sects of Judaism—Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes—and then spent three more years with a desert ascetic named Bannus (otherwise unknown), returning to Jerusalem at age 19, having decided 'to govern my life by the rules of the Pharisees, a sect having points of resemblance to that which the Greeks call the Stoic school' (*Vita* 12).

Another fact disclosed in Josephus' first published Greek sentence is that he originally took part in the Jewish uprising against Rome in Judaea in AD 66. When the rebellion broke out, Josephus was only 29 years old, but by virtue of his aristocratic rank he was appointed to one of the top posts in the Jewish revolutionary government: governor-general of Galilee and Gamla (*BJ* 2.568). Of his ultimate failure in that post Josephus wrote extensively and apologetically in *BJ* and *Vita*, two accounts which are somewhat compromised by contradictions and shifts of emphasis.[3] It is clear that Josephus had to fight on two fronts: against the Roman army which invaded in the spring of 67, and against his Jewish opponents and rivals in both Galilee and Jerusalem who were attempting to thwart him (*BJ* 2.569–647, 3.59–63, 110–408). Josephus' career as rebel commander came to an abrupt end in early summer 67 in the Lower Galilean

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[1] All translations from this point on, unless otherwise noted, are from the Loeb Classical Library edition of Josephus.

[2] There are some gross improbabilities in this information which will not detain us here. His elaboration of his genealogy, supported by records 'in the public registers', was meant to answer the 'would-be detractors of my family' (*Vita* 6).

[3] The *locus classicus* is Shaye J. D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian* (Leiden, 1979).

town of Jotapata, where he was trapped by the Roman general Vespasian. There he supervised a valiant defence (by his description) which ultimately and inevitably failed, and finally sought refuge in a cave where forty others were hiding. He was soon captured from that cave and saved his life by special pleading (see below).

Josephus remained in the Roman camp until the end of the war in AD 70, where he advised and served as spokesman for his Roman captors. Moreover, in his *BJ* he portrays himself as untiring in his efforts to persuade the extremist Jewish rebel leaders of Jerusalem to give up rebellion before they brought destruction upon the holy city and Temple. His disputations with these leaders were mainly religious—an internal Jewish debate over the correct interpretation of God's present intentions; in *BJ* we read in some detail Josephus' side of that dialogue. But no persuasion was possible, and the reader of *BJ* is made to feel the growing despair and horror of Josephus the eyewitness—as well as *mutatis mutandis* the Romans—as the narrative proceeds inexorably to its catastrophic conclusion: the grotesque last stages of the famine and the persistent internecine warfare among the besieged; the destruction of the Temple, with all the awful sights and sounds attending the conflagration; and then, a month later, the razing of the entire city; the sacrifices to the army standards in the Temple precincts; the grim public spectacles provided by Titus in Caesarea Philippi, Beirut and in cities throughout Syria; and the Flavian triumph in Rome.

Once in Rome, Josephus received Roman citizenship—including the new name Ti. Flavius Josephus—a pension, and a residence in Vespasian's former house (*Vita* 423). He spent the remaining approximately thirty years of his life there writing history (exact date of death unknown). But his life in Rome was not entirely quiet: while his writings are occupied with (but not entirely defined by) defence of the Jewish people against widespread, pernicious slanders, ignorance, and misunderstanding, he himself devoted much time to defending himself against two contradictory accusations brought by both Romans and Jews: that he was an unrepentant rebel who was still (in Rome!) encouraging resistance to Rome, and that he was traitor to his own people.

THE WRITER AND HIS AUDIENCES

Josephus was a prolific writer. During his long period in Rome he published one work in Aramaic and four in Greek, at a pace amounting to more than one 'book' or scroll per year. His four works in Greek represent four different genres. The first, the *Bellum Judaicum* (*BJ*), in seven books, is a work of contemporary history, based on eyewitness accounts and contemporary documents, in the style of Thucydides, telling the story of the Jewish uprising against Rome in AD

66–70.[4] In his first sentence he announced his fitness and opportune positioning to be a contemporary historian, a theme which he repeated at the end of his life: 'My qualification as historian of the war was that I had been an actor in many, and an eyewitness of most, of the events; in short, nothing whatever was said or done which I did not know' (*CA* 1.55). Second, after publishing the *BJ* in AD 79 or 81 at the latest,[5] Josephus spent the next fifteen years writing the *Antiquitates Judaicae* (*AJ*) in twenty books—a panoramic narrative encompassing all of Jewish history from Creation to AD 66. As an appendix to the *AJ*, Josephus published his autobiography (*Vita*), which does not, however, give an account of his life, as the ancient genre of autobiography required, but instead, for quite narrow polemical purposes, focuses mainly on a period of about six months, the time of his generalship in Galilee. Finally, in the late 90s, Josephus wrote the work commonly known by the inapt title *Contra Apionem* (*CA*) in two books, defending the antiquity of the Jews and the virtues of their literary and political culture and, with a dazzling display of learning, refuting the many vicious calumnies against them. The genre of this work is disputed,[6] but it is certainly a type different from the previous three. Josephus also announced (*AJ* 20.268) that he had outlined plans for yet another sort of literary composition: an expository account in four books of Jewish beliefs about God and of the laws which govern Jewish life. Each of Josephus' four completed works has an outwardly Greek form but an underlying deeply Jewish essence.

Josephus arrived in Rome with, apparently, an urge to write. His Flavian patrons did not compel him to write anything, and he could easily have satisfied his literary urge, or search for meaning, by entering the literary fray in one of his two native languages, Hebrew or Aramaic, in which there was an established and growing literary corpus: historiographical, poetic, midrashic, and novelistic works, as well as expansions of the Bible. Indeed, even before his Greek *BJ*, Josephus' first composition was a history of the Jewish rebellion in Aramaic, which he sent 'up to the *barbaroi*', (*BJ* 1.3), the inhabitants of the eastern-most edge of the Roman Empire and even the neighbouring nations beyond the Euphrates—'Parthians, Babylonians, the most remote tribes of Arabia, together with Jews beyond the Euphrates and the residents of Adiabene' (*BJ* 1.6). His object was evidently to impress on them, in their own language, the grandeur and power of the Roman Empire, with the subtle message that it would be futile to try to resist its rule. This Aramaic version, however, does not survive in any form.

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[4] The narrative actually opens in 171 BC, with the Hasmonean rebellion (Josephus sees deep causal connections between the two rebellions), and is carried through TO AD 73/4, the fall of Masada.

[5] Christopher P. Jones, 'Towards a Chronology of Josephus', *Scripta Classica Israelica*, 21 (2002), 113–21.

[6] See John M. G. Barclay, *Against Apion, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden, 2007), pp. xxx–xxxvi; and Steve Mason, '*Contra Apionem* in Social and Literary Context', in L. H. Feldman and J. R. Levison (eds.), *Josephus'* Contra Apionem: *Studies in its Character and Context* (Leiden, 1996), 187–228, at p. 217 ff., arguing for the *CA* as a philosophical *logos protreptikos*.

Yet soon after his initial work of history in his native tongue, Josephus heard his 'call to history'[7] in Greek. Although there was ample precedent for Jewish historiography in Greek,[8] Josephus' choice was difficult for a Jew of his background. By his own admission he had to labour hard in Rome to perfect his Greek and read as much of the classical and contemporary literature as he could, yet in doing so he was always cautious to adhere to the precepts and spirit of his education and upbringing in Jerusalem. As he himself wrote at the end of the *AJ*:

My compatriots admit that in our Jewish learning I far excel them. I have also laboured strenuously to partake of the realm of Greek prose and poetry, after having gained a knowledge of Greek grammar, although the habitual use of my native tongue has prevented my attaining precision in the pronunciation. For our people do not favor those persons who have mastered the speech of many nations, or who adorn their style with the smoothness of diction, because they consider that not only is such skill common to ordinary freemen but that even slaves who so choose may acquire it. But they give credit for wisdom to those alone who have an exact knowledge of the law and who are capable of interpreting the meaning of the Holy Scriptures.   (*AJ* 20.263–4)

Note that before disclosing his struggles in Greek, he made a point of asserting his primacy in the Jewish texts and traditions, which informed his writings throughout his career. Yet despite his imperfect competence in Greek, and more importantly the perils of rhetoric and style dominating truth, Josephus took up his pen in Greek. The Greek *BJ* shares, in part, the purpose of the Aramaic original in deterring further rebellion, especially among Jews, for many sections of the *BJ* read like fragments of the internal debate on the meaning of the war, the theological implications of the destruction of the Temple, and the ongoing question of whether the Jews had God's sanction to continue to resist their Roman overlords. Yet Josephus, the Greek author, had other purposes as well. These are partly disclosed, once again, in the first sentence of *BJ*: he was outraged by the distortions caused by the ignorance and prejudice of those historians who had already written about the Jewish rebellion in Latin and Greek, and he set out to correct glaring inaccuracies and to answer the slanders against the Jews. One can also sense in this sentence, Josephus' continual concern to explain his own role in and after the war, which naturally raised serious questions.

These same themes guided all Josephus' subsequent writings.[9] His varied *oeuvre*, with its multiple themes and purposes, addresses multiple audiences with different interests and backgrounds, and in this respect his themes do not always sit well with one another. The problem of intended audiences is quite complex with Josephus—certainly more so than with mainstream Greek historians, and

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[7] A phrase from John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge, 1997), 34.

[8] Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, 509–58.

[9] The *AJ*, *Vita*, and *CA* all contain explicit defenses of the accuracy and integrity of the *BJ*; for example, *AJ* 20.258; *Vita*, esp. 361–7; *CA* 1.47–56.

probably more complex even than the other known examples of oriental historiography in Greek. For Josephus was writing at the same time for:

A. An educated Greek-Roman audience with both apologetic and didactic purposes, explaining the Jewish revolt against Rome, and explaining and justifying Judaism, its practices, teachings, beliefs, institutions.

B. That same audience, refuting the various slanderous attacks on, and misrepresentations of, Judaism.

C. His Flavian patrons, to glorify their achievements and explain the war and its awful result (this applies mostly but not exclusively to *BJ*).

D. Greek-reading inhabitants of the eastern Roman Empire, to justify accommodation with Rome.

E. Both Romans and Jews, to offer his own apology and defence.

F. Jewish audiences, with plainly polemical as well as dissuasive purposes; to invalidate on theological grounds calls for further rebellion, and to discredit his enemies (personal and ideological).

G. Jewish audiences, to address the theological perplexities which were plaguing them after the destruction of the Temple.

The result is that different sections of his works—and sections within the same work—were written to attract the attention of, and instruct, these different audiences. When he was at his best, Josephus was able to address more than one audience simultaneously in the same passage, and even the same multivalent sentence.[10]

THE GREEK HISTORIAN

With his firm grounding in the Bible, Josephus already possessed a historiographical model (Gen.–2 Kgs) which had developed (whether or not in its final form) before Greek history-writing began. The biblical authors were the first to produce a coherent, rhetorically shaped prose narrative of the past with a sense of the meaningful flow of time, based on sources (oral, written, archival), drawing causal connections between events, portraying historical actors with psychological depth, and establishing a narrative voice distinctively different from the voices of the historical actors.[11] The truth of the

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[10] It is questionable, however, whether Josephus was widely read in his lifetime. See Jonathan J. Price, 'The Provincial Historian in Rome', in Joseph Sievers and Gaia Lembi (eds.), *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond* (Leiden, 2005), 101–18.

[11] See the helpful treatments by Y. Amit, *History and Ideology: An Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield, 1999); and ead., *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, 2001).

narrative was assumed: there was no need to launch into an elaborate defence of it or of themselves (the biblical narrators remained nameless in any case). Moreover, the biblical historical narrative assumes the existence of a providential God who directs and intervenes in history, interacts with humans and influences their decisions, rewards virtue and punishes wickedness, and has an overall plan. The sense of history is deep and pervasive, the present intelligible only in terms of the past: even injunctions and laws governing daily life, the main festivals, and social norms such as the treatment of slaves, resident aliens, and observance of the Sabbath, are explained and justified by recalling historical events. Historical time in the Torah and later historical books is a continuum which envisages its own extension into the future: the historical narrative itself enjoins the teaching of one's children the historical events which shaped the nation, making the past constantly present (Exod. 13.8–10; Josh. 4.21–4).

Thus Josephus arrived in Rome, not only with a model for analytical historical narrative, but also a profound biblical sense of history and its meaning. Yet he chose to write in Greek, with its different conventions and cultural presuppositions—and not the Greek of the Septuagint but the Greek of Thucydides. Josephus' immersion in Greek meant intensive study not only of syntax, grammar, and style, but also of all types of literary genres and techniques in both prose and poetry. There is every sign that he read widely (if not deeply);[12] the breadth of his learning is especially evident in the *CA*, in which he quotes liberally from both known and relatively obscure works. On the surface at least, his two great historical compositions, the *BJ* and *AJ*, follow the established conventions of Greek historiography.

The *Bellum Judaicum* is, as noted, Josephus' 'translation' of the original Aramaic version. Yet it is clear that our present Greek version cannot be an exact or even approximate translation of the Aramaic, since it contains many things which would not interest, nor be relevant to, an Aramaic-reading audience, much less to a Jewish one, such as explanations of Jewish customs and beliefs in the guise of Greek philosophy; justifications and explanations of Judaism and Jewish history in answer to Greek and Roman misconceptions; numerous references to Greek philosophy and quotations from Greek literature; digressions on the topography and natural history of Palestine for curious outsiders, and so on. It is also questionable whether any of the contents of the first book of the *BJ*, narrating from a Roman perspective the events in the East from the Maccabean revolt to the death of Herod, would have had an appropriate place in a Semitic narrative of the Jewish rebellion. Moreover, the *BJ* is written in the form of a distinctly Greek historical work: its analysis of events, language of causation, elaborate

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[12] On Thucydides and Josephus, see esp. Gottfried Mader, *Josephus and the Politics of Historiography* (Leiden, 2000).

methodological preface, distinctly Greek rhetorical tropes and the use of long speeches informing the narrative, its stylized biographical sketches, synchronisms, long topographical digressions, scientific information, and its polemics against other historians, would not translate well in a Semitic tongue. The *BJ* as we have it was thus a substantially new work, with only a loose relation to the original Aramaic version, with essentially Greek literary forms and substantially different content as well.

The Greek character of the *BJ* is enhanced by constant quotation of, and allusion to, the fifth-century Athenian historian Thucydides, beginning with the first sentence: Josephus' declaration that the Jewish War is 'not only the greatest of the wars of our own time, but so far as accounts have reached us, nearly of all whichever broke out between cities and nations', recalls Thucydides' famous statement that the war between Athens and Sparta was 'the greatest movement that had ever stirred the Hellenes, extending also to some of the barbarians, one might say even to a very large part of mankind' (Thuc. 1.1.2). The Greek readers of Josephus' generation would have instantly recognized the reference and appreciated not only the seriousness of Josephus' claim but also, through imitation (*mimesis*), his announced intention to write in the style and objective method of the great master. Like Thucydides, Josephus was writing about a single contemporary conflict in which he found universal meaning: it was 'the greatest war' in precisely this sense (and thus, in the true agonistic spirit of *mimesis*, he outdid the master). When he writes his most important themes and scenes, he thickens his quotations from Thucydides. For example, Josephus writes about the internal conflict among the Jews (*stasis*), a major theme of *BJ*, in utterly Thucydidean terms (e.g. 4.131–3, 364; cf. Thuc. 3.81–3). In addition, Jerusalem's first leader in the war, the high priest Ananus, son of Ananus, bears an unmistakable resemblance to Thucydides' Pericles (*BJ* 4.319–21; cf. Thuc. 2.65); the siege of Jerusalem (Books 4–6) adopts language from Thucydides' siege of Syracuse, and similarly the arrival in Jerusalem of news of Jotapata's fall (*BJ* 3.432) resembles the reporting in Athens of the navy's defeat in Sicily (Thuc. 8.1). By quoting the great Athenian historian, Josephus intended to invoke Thucydides' authority for his own account, to wear his mantle and reputation for accuracy, penetrating insight, and truth-telling—to stand on his shoulders, as it were—and look further than Thucydides himself could.

The second main Greek model for the *BJ* was Polybius, the second-century BC Greek historian of Rome, whose personal story is very much like Josephus'. Polybius was a leader in a war against Rome, was captured and taken back to Rome, was settled in the house of Rome's most powerful political leaders, became convinced of the invincibility of the Roman Empire, and wrote Roman history to persuade the subjects of that fact, and counsel submission and moderation. Although the direct verbal allusions to Polybius are sparse in *BJ*, there is little

doubt Josephus identified with him personally to a certain extent, and had him in mind while writing certain parts of the work.[13] It was in direct imitation of Polybius, for instance, that Josephus inserted the long digression on the Roman army (*BJ* 3.70–109; cf. Pol. 6.19–42). Josephus' stated purpose for that digression, very much like Polybius', was 'not so much to extol the Romans as to console those whom they have vanquished and to deter others who may be tempted to revolt. Perhaps, too, any cultured readers who are unacquainted with the subject may profit by an account of the organization of the Roman army' (*BJ* 3.108–9). Polybius was one of the first Greek historians of Rome, whose works have survived, to have approached in a systematic manner the question of the reasons for Rome's supremacy, and to attribute those reasons not to excessive brutality or barbarism on Rome's part but to divine approval and even Roman virtue; he believed that opposing the empire was irrational and self-destructive. Josephus continued the argument.

The *AJ*—properly, *Ioudaike Archaiologia*—is based on Hellenistic and Roman exemplars, reflecting the popularity of tracing origins of cities and peoples as a subject for historical research and display, particularly with a patriotic or didactic purpose.[14] Livy comes immediately to mind, but the title and length of Josephus' *AJ* recalls the twenty-book treatment of Roman antiquities (*Romaike Archaiologia*) published by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who is quoted and imitated in the language of the *AJ*.[15] Like Josephus, Dionysius was a provincial transposed to Rome, where he had a long literary career. Through rational analysis of myths and legends, Dionysius tried to show in his Antiquities that Rome was in fact a Greek foundation, and then, having endowed Rome with the prestige of antiquity and banished the misconception (so Dionysius thought)

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[13] He does not mention Polybius in the *BJ* but does at *AJ* 12.135–7, 358–9 and *CA* 2.84; on the connection between Polybius and Josephus see Shaye J. D. Cohen, 'Josephus, Jeremiah and Polybius', *History and Theory*, 21 (1982), 366–81; A. M. Eckstein, 'Josephus and Polybius: A Reconsideration', *Classical Antiquity*, 9 (1990), 175–208; F. W. Walbank, '"Treason" and Roman Domination: Two Case-studies, Polybius and Josephus', in id., *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World: Essays and Reflections* (Cambridge, 2002), 258–76; and Gregory E. Sterling, 'Explaining Defeat: Polybius and Josephus on the Wars with Rome', in Jürgen U. Kalms (ed.), *Internationales Josephus-Kolloquium, Aarhus 1999* (Münster, 2000), 135–51.

[14] In Jewish literature, *AJ* is an original project without true precedent, although there were possible precursors. See Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley, 1998), 13–23.

[15] Henry St. John Thackeray, *Josephus, the Man and the Historian* (1929; repr. edn, New York, 1967), 56–8; and Feldman, *Josephus' Interpretation of the Bible*, 8 ff., citing other bibliography. For rather clear guidelines in interpreting the *AJ* see Tessa Rajak, 'Josephus and the "Archaeology" of the Jews', in ead., *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome* (Leiden, 2002), 241–55. On the aims and audience of the *AJ* in general, see Steve Mason, 'Introduction to the *Judean Antiquities*', in Louis H. Feldman (ed.), *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*, vol. 3: *Judean Antiquities 1–4*, (Leiden, 2000), pp. xiii–xxxvi; and Mason, 'Should Anyone Inquire Further (Ant. 1.25): The Aim and Audience of Josephus', *Judean Antiquities/Life*, in id. (ed.), *Understanding Josephus: Seven Perspectives*, (Sheffield, 1998), 64–103.

of Rome's shallow roots, he wrote an encomium on the virtues of the city and people. Josephus one-upped Dionysius: he would begin his Antiquities further back than even the misty period of Roman and Greek mythology, with the moment of creation itself, both to prove the Jews' most ancient origins and also establish a main principle of his historical philosophy: namely, God's primacy in everything.

Josephus also bettered Dionysius in bringing his own Antiquities down to his own day (Dionysius stopped his narrative at the Punic Wars), in order to demonstrate the interconnectedness of all events past and present, and the consistency of God's moral principles governing historical events. Josephus asserts that his record goes back five thousand years (*AJ* 1.13; cf. *CA* 1.1), and is based on information and doctrines transmitted by a lawmaker, Moses, who had no peer in all human annals; no historian could attempt more than that.

In writing history with comprehensive scope, in order to demonstrate universal principles as well as a universal *telos* (see below), Josephus chose to write 'universal history'—a form which enjoyed great popularity and prestige from the fourth century BC, when it was invented, apparently, by Ephorus (*FGrH* 79). Ephorus' work has not survived, but it was admired by Polybius (5.33.2), who wrote what he himself described as universal history (*ta katholou*). Polybius explained that since his subject was a unique historical occurrence— Rome's subjection 'of nearly the whole inhabited world' (*oikoumene*) in a mere fifty-three years—he required an unprecedented form of historical writing— one which considered all parts together: 'a historian should bring before his readers under one synoptical view the operations by which Fortune (*tyche*) has accomplished her general purpose' (1.4.2, trans. Paton). Transpose 'God' for '*tyche*', and one would have a fair statement of Josephus' purpose in the *AJ*, with the crucial difference that the success and failure of individuals and nations are often inscrutable and by no means predictable: 'men who conform to the will of God, and do not venture to transgress laws that have been excellently laid down, prosper in all things beyond belief, and for their reward are offered by God felicity' (*AJ* 1.14). Josephus' *AJ* is 'universal' not, like Polybius' *History*, in covering all world events within a certain extent of time, but in covering all events associated with a certain people from the beginning of time. Moreover, the divine laws are said to apply not just to Israel but to all humanity, since they reflect universal truths.[16] You do not have to be Jewish: those who recognize the true God and practise virtue are rewarded. Cyrus and Alexander, as well as Petronius, the Roman governor of Syria who resisted Caligula's order to erect his statue in the Jerusalem Temple, are just three outstanding examples of rewarded virtue (*AJ* 11.1 ff., 331 ff.; *BJ* 2.184 ff.).

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[16] *AJ* 1.5 ff., 20.260–1. See Mason, 'Introduction to the *Judean Antiquities*', p. xxvii.

THE HISTORIAN AS PRIEST AND PROPHET

In his first Greek sentence, Josephus was careful to mention his priestly status. This was considered by him to be a significant qualification for writing history. It was first of all a demonstration of his social and political status which translated into personal distinction and integrity. Jerusalem's permanent population in the first century AD, and in fact the entire society of Judaea, was ruled by a priestly oligarchy—the Temple establishment—itself dominated by a small clique of high priestly and other aristocratic priestly families which included Josephus' family. As we saw, he opens his autobiography with his exalted pedigree, stressing that among Jews, 'the priesthood is the mark of an illustrious line' (*Vita* 1). Josephus never ceased boasting, in all his works, of his own status as an aristocratic priest, and he makes a point of praising men of similar distinction when they appear in his narratives. For example, the high priest Ananus, son of Ananus, who was leader of revolutionary Jerusalem until murdered in the *coup d'état* in AD 67, was 'most prudent and wise' (*sophronestatos*), and earns a eulogy worthy of Pericles: 'A man on every ground revered and of the highest integrity, Ananus, with all the distinction of his birth, rank and the honours to which he had attained, yet delighted to treat the very humblest as his equals' (*BJ* 4.151, 319). Josephus' imagined perfect society, which he finds prescribed in the Torah and treats extensively in the *AJ* and *CA*, is essentially a hierocracy, an aristocracy of priests which he calls *theokratia* (probably an original coinage, *CA* 2.165).

Thus aristocratic priestly background meant upright character in Josephus' lexicon, and his personal integrity assures the integrity of his historical account. Greek and Roman readers would understand the point: an historian's upright character was an essential guarantee of his fairness, prudence, accuracy, and conscientiousness as a writer.[17] Josephus' Jewish audiences, if they were able to set aside personal animus against him, would naturally have seen in his priestly status a qualification of supreme importance. The priests were by tradition the keepers of the records and, as such, the guardians of the people's historical traditions. The records of the Jewish nation have been kept 'with scrupulous accuracy', Josephus wrote: 'Not only did our ancestors in the first instance set over this business men of the highest character, devoted to the service of God, but they took precautions to ensure that the priests' lineage should be kept unadulterated and pure' (*CA* 1.29–30). We shall return to this statement.

Josephus' second main qualification as historian was his prophetic ability, discovered at a critical moment in the Jewish war. Let us return to the cave at

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[17] Cf. Lucian, *De Scrib. Hist.* 41; and Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography*, 128–31.

Jotapata.[18] According to Josephus' story (*BJ* 3.341–391), the Romans discovered his hiding-place in the town and offered the cave's occupants terms of surrender, which Josephus wanted to accept but his companions refused, preferring suicide. There ensued a debate, in which Josephus did not prevail with his arguments, both philosophical and practical, against suicide, but did manage to persuade the other Jews to accept a procedure of self-destruction whereby they would all kill each other according to lots drawn. Josephus handled the lots, and 'whether by fortune or the providence of God' (*BJ* 3.391), he was one of the last two remaining alive. He persuaded this man to surrender, and Josephus, as the enemy general, was taken to the general Vespasian in the Roman camp. There Josephus became inspired:

Suddenly there came back into his mind those nightly dreams, in which God had fore-told to him the impending fate of the Jews and the destinies of the Roman sovereigns. He was an interpreter of dreams and skilled in divining the meaning of ambiguous utterances of God; a priest himself, and of priestly descent, he was not ignorant of the prophecies in the sacred books. At that hour he was inspired to read their meaning and, recalling the dreadful images of his recent dreams, he offered up a silent prayer to God. 'Since it please thee', so it ran, 'who didst create the Jewish nation, to break thy work, since fortune has wholly passed to the Romans, and since thou hast made choice of my spirit to announce the things that are to come, I willingly surrender to the Romans and consent to live; but I take thee to witness that I go, not as a traitor, but as thy minister.'

(*BJ* 3.351–4)

Note that Josephus attributes his knowledge of, and ability to interpret, written sources and prophecies to his background as priest. From this moment, Josephus established his career as a prophetic teller of truth, which saved his life in a critical juncture and later assumed the form of history-writing.

In his God-sanctioned but futile appeals to his countrymen in Jerusalem, Josephus cut a figure very similar to Jeremiah, and in fact his story was similar to that of the biblical prophet: they were both priests who railed against the sins of their generation and predicted God's punishment and victory for the enemy; both were abused by their own people, accused of deserting to the enemy, and railed against false prophets who predicted victory and retribution. Josephus even explicitly compares himself to Jeremiah in his big speech to the besieged of

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[18] I shall use the terms 'prophet' and 'prophecy', since Josephus portrays himself as endowed with prophetic (predictive) foresight attributed to a divine source, although he avoids the termi-nology *prophetes* in describing himself. See Joseph Blenkinsopp, 'Prophecy and Priesthood in Joesphus', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 25 (1974), 239–62; Rebecca Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus* (New York/Oxford, 1993), 7–34; Louis H. Feldman, 'Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus', in Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak (eds.), *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism* (New York/London, 2006), 210–39; and Lester L. Grabbe, 'Thus Spake the Prophet Josephus…: The Jewish Historian on Prophets and Prophecy', ibid., 240–7. On Josephus' career as a prophetic seer, see Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine*, 35–79.

Jerusalem in AD 70: 'Although Jeremiah loudly proclaimed that [the Jews in Jerusalem] were hateful to God for their transgressions against Him and would be taken captive unless they surrendered the city, neither the king nor the people put him to death. But you…assail with abuse and missiles me who exhort you to save yourselves' (*BJ* 5.391–3). The jeremiad of warning and lamentation, often very close to the language of the biblical text, resounds throughout Books 5 and 6 of *BJ* especially. The Jewish reader was supposed to hear the sharp echoes, which would have been lost on Roman ears.[19]

Josephus seems also to have identified closely with the biblical Joseph, who also received God's word of impending disaster, not directly but through dreams. Josephus boasts that he was adept at interpreting the dreams of others: he saved himself from abject imprisonment and perhaps even death through dream interpretation, and brought himself to the attention of the king, who gave him a privileged position from which he could save his own people. Like Joseph, Josephus is merely vouchsafed visions and knowledge of the future; God's plan is revealed to him in declarative, not conditional sentences. He may at critical moments offer private prayers (e.g. *BJ* 3.353–4), and even suggest that repentance could reverse God's decree (although he apparently did not believe it: *BJ* 5.415, 6.310), but it is not a dialogue, a negotiation, or even mediation between the people and God. The biblical Joseph did not urge Pharoah to pray to God to avert the seven-year famine, for that disaster had been decreed; rather he was the divine messenger who counselled preparing for coming hardship and thereby saved his people. Joseph was able to persuade the monarch; Josephus was unable to persuade his recalcitrant compatriots. Josephus spent the rest of his life in the court of the foreign ruler, incessantly sounding his (divinely sanctioned) message of conciliation and accommodation—still urgent even after the destruction of Jerusalem—but to his personal regret, he was not able to use his advantage as effectively as the biblical Joseph.

Josephus' self-identification as a priest and prophet is crucial to understanding his extended meditation on, and comparison of, Greek and Jewish historiography—one of the most remarkable methodological statements in all Greek literature (*CA* 1.15–53).[20] After indicting the Greeks for their lack of records or accurate information of their own antiquity, Josephus observes that, especially when it comes to their ancient history, Greek historians regularly contradict each other.

[19] See Cohen, 'Josephus, Jeremiah and Polybius'; and Eckstein, 'Josephus and Polybius and Eckstein'; and on prophets and their role in shaping and recording Israel's history see Y. Amit, 'The Role of Prophecy and Prophets in the Chronicler's World', in Floyd and Haak (eds.), *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism*, 80–101.

[20] On what follows, see Jed Wyrick, *The Ascension of Authorship: Attribution and Canon Formation in Jewish, Hellenistic and Christian Traditions* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), chs. 2 and 3; Shaye J. D. Cohen, 'History and Historiography in the *Against Apion* of Josephus', in Ada Rapoport-Albert (ed.), *Essays in Jewish Historiography* (Atlanta, 1988), 1–11; and now the commentary by Barclay, *Against Apion*, 11–40.

This he attributes not only to their long neglect to keep accurate records, but also to their agonistic concern to excel in literary artistry at the expense of truth: 'and their choice of subject is determined by the prospect which it offers them of outshining their rivals…others set out to criticize the facts or the historians as the road to reputation' (*CA* 1.25). This method, Josephus proclaims, is the 'utter opposite of history', and he offers an alternative theory of history which, written as it is in Greek, is nothing less than astonishing:

For the proof of historical veracity is universal agreement in the description, oral or written, of the same events. On the contrary, each of these writers, in giving his divergent account of the same incidents, hoped thereby to be thought the most veracious of all. While, then, for eloquence and literary ability we must yield the palm to the Greek historians, we have no reason to do so for the veracity in the history of antiquity, least of all where the particular history of each separate foreign nation is concerned.

(*CA* 1.26–7)

After this assertion, which ignores the possibility of different perspectives of the same event, it remains only to demonstrate that the records of the Jewish nation were, by contrast, preserved with scrupulous care by men of the highest integrity— the priests—and that the Hebrew records contain no discrepancy but are utterly consistent in themselves, contradicted by no outside source nor contested by any Jew. Josephus disregards even the *appearance* of contradictions and inconcinnities in the biblical text. In his view, the accuracy of those books is assured by the purveyors of true information: the prophets, who 'obtained their knowledge of the most remote and ancient history through the inspiration which they owed to God'. Thus, the preservation of Jewish records by the *priests* and writing of Jewish history by the *prophets*, as well as the absence of contradictory accounts, assure the absolute truth of the historical record in the Bible: 'Our twenty-two books, which are justly believed and trusted, contain the record of all time' (*CA* 1.38).

Finally, Josephus expatiates on the immutability of the biblical books, to which the Jews are utterly devoted:

It is an instinct with every Jew, from the day of his birth, to regard [the books of the Bible] as the decrees of God, to abide by them, and, if need be, cheerfully to die for them. Time and again before now the sight has been witnessed of prisoners enduring tortures and death in every form in the theatres, rather than utter a single word against the laws and the allied documents. What Greek would endure as much for the same cause? Even to save the entire collection of his nation's writings from destruction he would not face the smallest personal injury. For to the Greeks they are mere stories improvised according to the fancy of their authors.   (*CA* 1.42–4) [21]

It is uncertain whether a Greek reader would understand Josephus' rhetorical question, or wonder whether it was indeed a personal failing not to be willing to

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[21] See in addition *CA* 2.153, 169, 179, 183, 189, 221, 283, 294.

die to preserve his city's archives. Even stranger to a Greek would be the suggestion that the accuracy of an historical account is impugned by a rival version and interpretation of events. Anyone brought up on Greek learning, in which dialectic and competition are integral to the search for truth, would find the intellectual and literary competition in Greek historiography to be a natural, unquestioned part of the profession and art. And in all Greek historiography, there is to be found no claim of divine affirmation of the accuracy of the account.

Thus ultimately, to one who both reads Josephus' entire corpus and can put together scattered pieces of information and declarations of method and intent, it appears that Josephus' double status as priest and prophet are for him his essential qualifications for writing history: he had access to the best records and the best authorities. These qualifications served him first as a contemporary historian in *BJ*: he relied on his own experience and observation which, because of his background and prophetic ability, was superior to that of anyone else, and he possessed knowledge of the truth, and by divine insight could see the purpose of the unfolding narrative. Josephus understood not only the true nature of contemporary events, but future consequences of present actions. Second, as a historian of Jewish antiquity in *AJ* he was equally well served by his status as priest and prophet, for he could expertly interpret the national records: the Jews 'give credit for wisdom to those alone who have an exact knowledge of the law and who are capable of interpreting the meaning of the Holy Scriptures' (*AJ* 20.264).[22] In the preface to that work Josephus notes with respect that Ptolemy II had commissioned a Greek translation of the Law (the Torah), which was a great service to humanity, but that this did not include more than the first five books of the Bible: he would carry the story further, despite the immensity of the task. For his *AJ* 'will embrace our entire ancient history and political constitution, translated from the Hebrew records' (*AJ* 1.5), and he would relate the content of Scriptures 'in the proper order...neither adding nor omitting anything' (1.17).[23]

Of course Josephus did not translate the biblical account word for word, but rather retold the story in his own way, adding and omitting details as he saw fit. Yet he meant what he said: for he not only *translated* but *interpreted* the Bible, as is evident in his word for 'translate' ($\mu\epsilon\theta\epsilon\rho\mu\eta\nu\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\omega$), which means 'interpret' as well.[24] In this enterprise Josephus was firmly in the Jewish tradition of the developing Targumim: interpretive renderings of the biblical text.[25] He thought of his

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[22] Harold W. Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the* Antiquitates Judaicae *of Flavius Josephus* (Missoula, 1976), 53, 181–4; and Thackeray, *Josephus*, 69.

[23] On the life of this phrase in Hellenistic literature see Willem Cornelis van Unnik, *Flavius Josephus als historischer Schriftsteller* (Heidelberg, 1978), ch. 2.

[24] See Feldman's illuminating note in his *Flavius Josephus, Translation and Commentary*, ad loc.

[25] For an introduction to this complex topic, see Martin Jan Mulder (ed.), *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Assen-Maastricht/Philadelphia, 1988), chs. 7 and 8.

rewritten Bible as both revealing the *truest meaning* of the sacred writings, neither adding nor omitting anything *essential to its true meaning.* It should also be remembered that Josephus, in his creative adaptation of his written source, was also doing nothing less than any rhetorically trained Greek or Roman historian did: filling out and modifying other written narratives according to his own conceptions of the underlying historical truth. The truth which Josephus elaborates is the perfection of God's laws and the rewards for following them. The *AJ* establishes the basic principles of the Jews' *politeia* as the most perfect constitution, but in contrast to Greek and Latin theoretical works on ideal constitutions, Josephus' *AJ* uses the historical narrative to demonstrate that in fact when the Jews adhered to the *politeia* they prospered, and failed only when, because of moral lapses, they departed from its precepts.

Josephus' claim that he based his entire *AJ* on impeccably true sacred writings without addition or subtraction is further complicated by the fact that the period covered by the Bible occupies not much more than the first ten books. To be precise, Josephus' biblical narrative gives out at *AJ* 11.296, with his extensive retelling of the story of Esther. After that, his story continues with extra-textual additions to the Book of Nehemiah (11.297–303), and then proceeds to the story of Alexander the Great and his invasion of Palestine, again without any indication that his sources have substantially changed ('At about this same time Philip the king of Macedon died at Aigai', 11.304). Yet as he recounts in *CA* 1.1, he wrote the entire *AJ*, covering a period of five thousand years, 'on the basis of our sacred books'. In fact, the second half of *AJ* is based on an amalgam of mostly unidentified Jewish traditions, Greek (and probably Latin) historiography and geography, and archival documents, some of them identified and quoted at length. In this second, post-biblical half of *AJ*, Josephus maintains his claim not to omit anything from the true record (*AJ* 14.1), and he also reasserts his unswerving commitment to the truth—a statement in which he is not only repeating a Greek historiographical *topos,* but speaking again as the Jewish historian with prophetic powers (cf. *AJ* 14.2–3). Josephus' self-identification as priest and prophet helps explain why he feels no need to draw attention to the seam between the biblical and post-biblical narrative, as well as other curious *cruces* in his writings.[26] His continuous narrative was as thoroughly solid and authoritative as the holy writings.

While adopting the conventions of Greek historiography, Josephus knew that his historical writing was unconventional, and not just because of his topic. This acknowledgement comes, again, in the introduction to his first work, the *BJ*, where, after obvious and even excessive Thucydidean posturing, he makes a startling admission:

I shall faithfully recount the actions of both combatants; but in my reflections on the events I cannot conceal my private sentiments, nor refuse to give my personal sympathies scope to bewail my country's misfortunes.... Should, however, any critic censure

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[26] For example, *AJ* 1.6 vs. *BJ* 1.17–18.

me for my strictures upon the tyrants or their bands of marauders or for my lamentations over my country's misfortunes, I ask his indulgence for a compassion which is contrary to the law of history (παρὰ τῆς ἱστορίας νόμον). For of all the cities under Roman rule it was the lot of ours to attain to the highest felicity and to fall to the lowest depths of calamity. Indeed, in my opinion, the misfortunes of all nations since the world began fall short of those of the Jews; and since the blame lay with no foreign nation, it was impossible to restrain one's grief. Should, however, any critic be too austere for pity, let him credit the history with the facts, the historian with the lamentations.

<div align="right">(BJ 1.9–12)</div>

Here, in a statement without exact parallel in any surviving Greek or Roman historian, Josephus openly acknowledges that he intends to violate 'the law of history' by giving vent to his personal emotions, particularly his intense personal detestation of the Jewish extremists, whom he disparages as 'tyrants'.[27] 'Bewailing one's country's misfortunes' did indeed have precedent in Hellenistic historians. Diodorus of Sicily, for instance, bewails the sorrows of Greece in 146 BC as an unprecedented calamity: 'Because of the magnitude of these sufferings, one could neither write nor read of this time without weeping' (Diod. 32.26.1). Even Thucydides was fond of superlatives, pointing out dozens of unprecedented disasters suffered by the Greeks during the Peloponnesian War. Frankly confessed patriotic love of homeland, and censure of compatriots, are not foreign to the most stalwart advocates of objectivity. Polybius (38.4) censures certain Greek states for acting disastrously because of 'faithlessness and cowardice', and justifies his 'abandoning the style proper to historical narrative' to render his harsh judgement. Josephus may have had this passage in mind when writing the above, but his thought and purpose are fundamentally different: Polybius justifies expatiating upon his compatriots' mistakes in the interest of truth, his censure amounting, not to uncontrolled emotion, but cold analysis; whereas Josephus apologizes for an emotional outburst which might well detract from the truth, and for which he is compelled to apologize and beg indulgence from the reader. No surviving historian so openly acknowledges such overt bias against one of the central players of his historical narrative: that was something which ancient historians made a special effort to disavow and cover up,[28] as in Tacitus' famous formulation that an historian must write *sine ira et studio.* Josephus asks his Greek reader to ignore open signs of bias and pay attention just to the facts, as if selection of facts, not to mention rhetoric and vocabulary ('tyrants' is a strong condemnation in Greek), did not influence presentation and judgement.

Perspicacious and liberal readers might have seen in this statement an attempt by Josephus to prove his own critical approach to history in a roundabout way, through frank self-criticism: he is aware of the requirements of historical writing,

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[27] Examples of such lamentations may be found at *BJ* 5.19–20 and 5.566; see Eckstein, 'Josephus and Polybius', 183.
[28] Cf. Lucian, *De Scrib. Hist.* 41.

and if he violates them, it is always with keen awareness, not thereby to distort the facts. Thus an open acknowledgement of personal involvement, even bias, is a clever way of blunting pre-emptively all criticism of the same. But we imagine that most Romans and Greeks who picked up *BJ*'s first scroll out of interest in the topic would have simply smiled at the excesses and emotionality of the oriental arriviste writing for the first time in Greek, taking the conventions of Greek historiography beyond polite limits. The opening of *BJ* is indeed written in good, literary Greek, overtly imitating the best models of historical prose, promising an exciting narrative, and that promise (on which Josephus delivers) is what would have impelled most Greek and Roman readers to continue.

So much for his Greek readers. The Jewish reader would have understood Josephus' outbursts and bitter lamentations throughout his works as thunderings in the style of an enraged prophet. The Old Testament prophets excelled in blaming the hypocrisy, extremism, and godlessness of those Jews—whether individuals or an entire generation—who alienated God, leading to severe punishment, ultimately the destruction of the holy city and Temple, and the exile of Israel.

THE THEOLOGY OF JOSEPHUS[29]

No Jew of Josephus' generation could have thought that God had no part in the destruction of the Temple. Jewish apocalyptic literature written in the centuries following that event,[30] as well as rabbinic literature, have preserved many strands of the anguished debate over the meaning of the catastrophe. The question was not whether, but why God let it happen.

Josephus had an original view. According to the historian, God's decision to destroy the Temple was made even before the war broke out. Josephus says that Cestius Gallus' surprising and sudden retreat from Jerusalem in AD 66—something which neither the historian nor any of our other sources could explain rationally—happened since 'God, because of those criminals, had already turned away from His sanctuary and prevented the end of the war from being realized on that day' (*BJ* 2.539)—even before the first desecration of the Temple. This is confirmed by statements which accompany the narration of the

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[29] On Josephus' theology in general see Per Bilde, *Flavius Josephus between Jerusalem and Rome*, (Sheffield, 1988), 182–91; Paul Spilsbury, 'Josephus', in D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A Seigfrid (eds.), *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 1. (Tübingen/Grand Rapids, 2001), 241–60; id., 'God and Israel in Josephus: A Patron-Client Relationship', in Mason (ed.), *Understanding Josephus*, 172–91; and Helgo Lindner, *Geschichtsauffassung des Flavius Josephus im Bellum Judaicum* (Leiden, 1972).

[30] Especially significant are the works known as Second Baruch, Fourth Ezra, and the Fifth Sibylline Oracle. See the editions and translations of these in James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, NY, 1983).

Temple's destruction: 'God had indeed long since condemned the Temple to the flames, and the fated day arrived in the cycle of time' (*BJ* 6.250); and 'We may draw very great consolation from the thought that there is no escape from Fate...and one may well marvel at the exactness of the cycle of Destiny' (*BJ* 6.267–8). Thus, according to Josephus, the awful decree of the Temple's destruction was sealed long before the rebels committed their crimes in the sanctuary. This implies the belief that God decreed the Temple's destruction in foreknowledge of the rebels' crimes, not in immediate reaction to them in real time. The theological implications of foreknowledge and anticipatory decrees are not worked out by Josephus, but even the exact point in time at which the decree was irreversibly made is never made explicitly clear.

Moreover, the sin was not of the whole nation, but rather of an isolated group. The whole nation, in Josephus' view, emerges as victims of extremism, made to pay the awful price, even though at first, he uncomfortably acknowledges, the people widely supported the rebellion. This in itself raises further theological questions about God's justice and mercy—collective punishment for individual sin, and the absence of the power of repentance to overturn a divine decree—but that is a question which Josephus does not address in any detail. His only answer is that the people were given multiple signs of the impending disaster and failed, through their own 'stupidity' (*anoia*) and their deception by false prophets, to recognize the true meaning of the signs (*BJ* 6.286–315).

If God willed the destruction, then the Romans were ultimately blameless, mere tools performing God's will, 'unwilling hands' (already in the preface to *BJ* at 1.10). Josephus speaks even of the Romans' efforts to save both people and city from the Jews' own destructive hands. Titus, far from the figure of 'the evil Titus' in rabbinic legend and apocalyptic tracts is, because of his clemency and commiseration with the people's suffering, a semi-tragic figure forced against his will to destroy a beautiful city and temple, and harm so many innocent people. In describing the Romans' suppression of the rebellion, Josephus repeatedly emphasizes the fact that despite their harshness they did less harm than the Jewish extremists. There was a counter-current in Josephus' epoch bitterly denouncing Rome for immorality and its destruction of Jerusalem, and anticipating God's imminent restoration of Jerusalem and punishment of the Romans. This tendency is contained in apocalyptic works, such as the Fifth Sibylline Oracle, written in Greek in Egypt some time before the Bar Kochba revolt, as well as in rabbinic midrash. Josephus' view reflected in part an internal Jewish debate on the meaning of the destruction. But there is a difference: even those works which viewed the Romans as a tool of God, saw them eventually being punished for their part. Josephus adopted the first part of this Jewish view—the Romans were God's tools—but suppressed the second.

Josephus himself, although he abhorred the militant apocalyptic movements of the first century which brought on the rebellion, did not disparage the idea of an apocalypse per se. He was after all a believing Jew, thus his acceptance of

some version of a major theological trend in Judaism in the first century is to be expected. As a revolutionary in AD 66, he may even have shared the apocalyptic expectations of many of the rebels at first; if so, he has hidden that earlier conviction very well. Like other Jews, Josephus had a notion of all human history being played out according to cycles determined by God, in which Israel will ultimately emerge triumphant, and he conveyed this idea by very indirect means in the *BJ*, a bit more openly in the *AJ*, but never expounded it in detail or explicitly. Josephus' attitude toward the apocalypse, and his belief in the future redemption of Israel, are conveyed in a manner suited only to the initiated.

The Romans viewed their power and fortune as evidence of the gods' approval, and their every setback as punishment for their departure from the old, divinely sanctioned Roman virtues. It was only natural in the ancient world to attribute material success to divine support, and reverses of fortune to divine displeasure. Similarly, in the speech which Josephus wrote for Agrippa II (*BJ* 2.345–401) just before the outbreak of the war, the Jewish king tries to steer the excited population, after a nasty provocation by the procurator Florus, away from expanding hostility, by arguing that it would be futile to try to oppose the Roman Empire, since it has subdued all of the civilized world, and that this proves not only Rome's invincible strength but also God's favour, 'since without God's help so vast an empire could never have been built up' (*BJ* 2.390). This speech has often been seen as a piece of extended flattery of the Romans and their unprecedented might. But the reader should be aware of what is not being said. On close inspection, Agrippa does *not* argue that Roman rule should be accepted because it is inherently good, but because God, for his own reasons, has left the Jews no other choice, seeing that he has favoured the Romans with such immense wealth and power.[31] This contrasts with the encomia which were being written and declaimed by Greek-speaking provincials in this period: one thinks of P. Aelius Aristides, the second-century orator who wrote a panegyric in praise of Rome's achievement and universal improvement of life in the Mediterranean basin. By contrast, Agrippa warns that opposing Rome will result in disaster: 'they will burn the holy city to the ground and exterminate your race' (*BJ* 2.397). He urges the Jews to choose 'the blessings of peace', which are not positive benefits but the absence of molestation. A generation before Josephus' birth, Dionysius of Halicarnassus had written his history of early Rome so that provincials might

neither feel indignation at their present subjection...nor rail at Fortune for having wantonly bestowed upon an undeserving city a supremacy so great and already of so long continuance...[which] produced infinite examples of virtue in men whose

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[31] M. Stern, 'Joseph son of Matthias, the Historian of the *Jewish War*' and 'The *Jewish War* of Joseph son of Matthias and the Roman Emperors', in Moshe Amit, Gafni Isaiah, and Moshe David Herr (eds.), *Studies in Jewish History: The Second Temple Period* (Jerusalem, 1991), 378–92 and 393–401 (Hebr.).

superiors, either for piety or for justice or for life-long self-control or for warlike valour, no city, either Greek or barbarian, has ever produced.   (Dion. Hal. 1.5, trans. Cary)

By contrast, Agrippa's speech lays out a practical argument for submission: it is part of an internal Jewish debate rather than a presentation piece for Roman ears.

Similar to Agrippa's speech is Josephus' own speech to the besieged Jews in Jerusalem (*BJ* 5.362–419), where he repeats the argument that the extent and power of the Roman Empire are proof of God's approval, and thus it would be self-destructive to expect help from God in opposing Rome. Then, to prove his point, Josephus embarks on a review of Jewish history, mentioning incidents which would scarcely have been intelligible to the Roman reader. He attempts to show that whenever the Jews enjoyed God's favour, they prevailed, even over opponents who were far stronger than they were, and whenever they lost God's favour they were crushed. There is no praise of Rome in this speech; only emphasis on necessity. Both Agrippa's and Josephus' speeches offer, essentially, a unified theological interpretation of past history and the present situation: submission to a stronger power has been dictated by God.

These two meditations on the Roman Empire and God's will offer good examples of Josephus' skill in writing for more than one audience at once. It is true that, in trying to answer conflicting demands, Josephus could write difficult and ambiguous Greek; his sentences can be convoluted, his vocabulary imprecise, alternately repetitive and colourfully varied. Yet he sometimes hits on the right formulation, as in these speeches. For example,[32] in his own speech, Josephus says that 'fortune (*tyche*) had passed over to the Romans from every side—God, who brought dominion round to each nation in turn, now was over Italy' (*BJ* 5.367). This seems innocuous and self-evident: the notion of worldly success stemming from divine favour, as well as the concept of the rise and fall of empires, was intelligible to both Roman and Jewish readers (cf. Pol. 29.21; discussion on Daniel below). Yet the syntax of the sentence would allow two different understandings of the historical mechanism. The Roman reader naturally would understand *tyche* to be predominant, God the immediate instrument of her inscrutable decree. As Polybius asserted (36.17), *tyche* should be invoked as historical explanation when no rational explanation is forthcoming; consequently *tyche* herself is not rational, even if on the intermediate level she can intervene to reward virtue or punish transgression. *Tyche*'s 'passing-over' to Italy would not be, to the Roman mind, part of a grand scheme guided by a god with a plan. Yet this is precisely how the Jewish reader, with a knowledge of Daniel and the same biblical sense of history in the speeches, would understand the sentence: God had favoured different nations with dominion, or 'fortune', and now brought this *tyche* around to the Romans. Thus *tyche* is God's instrument, not the other way around. God's plan is obscure but not inscrutable, and

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[32] On what follows, see Price, 'The Provincial Historian in Rome'.

certainly not irrational. As Josephus remarks on the Romans' successful attack on the Upper City in Jerusalem: 'Here we may signally discern at once the power of God over unholy men and the fortune (*tyche*) of the Romans' (*BJ* 6.399).

Faith in this divine direction provides hope in grim necessity.[33] Josephus' Agrippa acknowledges that the Romans enjoy world domination—'for now' (*nun*, *BJ* 2.358, 367, 370), strongly hinting in this small word that Rome's empire will also some day yield to a greater power. To a Jewish reader, the only power greater than an earthly empire embracing the entire civilized world was obviously the God of the Hebrew Bible. Agrippa's encoded language suggests that Jewish redemption and restoration would eventually arrive. The signs of 'the cycle of Destiny' (*BJ* 6.268) had to be interpreted correctly and the next stage awaited patiently: the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple was not the end of the world, but the next stage in a cosmic plan.

In the *AJ*, Josephus allowed himself a more open but still encoded expression of his belief in eventual Jewish redemption after the certain fall of the Roman Empire. This comes out especially in his narration of Daniel's prophecies. Some have thought, with good reason, to add Daniel to the prophets with whom Josephus personally identified, as a foreigner in the king's court making astonishingly accurate predictions about future events—even though this personal identification is never stated explicitly.[34] It is striking that Josephus included the Daniel story at all, since he omitted or rewrote other biblical episodes with uncomfortable implications. In fact, Josephus changed a few details of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue in order to make it correspond to current history and predict the fall of Rome: having witnessed the fall of the Babylonian, Median-Persian, and Greek kingdoms, as documented in the holy books, the last kingdom, of sturdy bronze—Rome—will be smashed by the enigmatic stone. This stone was commonly interpreted in Josephus' day as the messianic age, but here Josephus retreats with coy ambiguity:

Daniel also revealed to the king the meaning of the stone, but I have not thought it proper to relate this, since I am expected to write of what is past and done and not of what is to be; if however there is anyone who has so keen a desire for exact information that he will not stop short of inquiring more closely but wishes to learn about the hidden things that are to come, let him take the trouble to read the Book of Daniel, which he will find among the sacred writings.   (*AJ* 10.210)

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[33] See Jonathan J. Price, 'Josephus and the Dialogue on the Destruction of Jerusalem', in Christfried Böttrich and Jens Henser (eds.), *Josephus und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen* (Tübingen, 2007), 181–94.

[34] See Steve Mason, 'Josephus, Daniel and the Flavian House', in Fausto Parente and Joseph Sievers (eds.), *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith* (Leiden, 1994), 161–91. See also Christopher T. Begg and Paul Spilsbury, *Flavius Josephus, Translation and* Commentary, vol. 5: *Judean Antiquities Books 8–10* (Leiden, 2005), 283 n. 896 and bibliography cited there.

It is difficult to imagine that many Roman or Greek readers, who had the endurance to read to the tenth book of the *AJ*, would then seek out the Jewish sacred writings for further enlightenment: a prediction of the eventual fall of the Roman Empire was philosophically and historically sound, for Rome had long been thought susceptible to collapse under the weight of its own crimes and excess, as Sallust's prefaces to his two surviving monographs clearly demonstrate, but what the next historical cycle would bring was perforce unknown. But the Jewish reader would have instantly grasped the messianic reference, implicit in the unquestioned belief that 'God governs human affairs' and 'the universe is directed by a blessed and immortal Being, to the end that the whole of it may endure' (*AJ* 10.278). Josephus did not elaborate but his message was clear to his co-religionists: our time will come, as foretold in our prophetic books.

Clearly, Josephus had undergone a kind of conversion in the Roman camp in AD 67, in which he did not lose his religious faith or belief in the ultimate moral content and purpose of Jewish history, or even in the ultimate vindication of Israel, but rather his former belief in armed rebellion against the mighty Roman Empire. If at one time he believed that rebellion against Rome was God's will, he abandoned that belief. He changed his interpretation of the holy writings and their meaning for the present and immediate future. This conversion not of religious conviction but in the interpretation of text and divine intent and the prescriptions of political advocacy, as well as an abiding interest, from the moment of his capture, in accommodation with Rome on both an individual and national level, motivated and defined everything Josephus wrote in his thirty-year career as an historian.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

167 BC	Hasmonean Revolt breaks out
63 BC	Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem
40–4 BC	Reign of Herod the Great
AD 6–41, 44–66	Direct rule of Judaea by Rome (Pontius Pilate 26–36)
AD 66	Jewish rebellion breaks out
AD 67	Josephus captured in Jotapata
AD 68–9	Year of the Four Emperors
AD 69–79	Vespasian emperor
AD 70	Jerusalem destroyed by Titus
AD 71	Josephus taken to Rome, becomes Roman citizen
AD 73–4	Masada falls
AD 79–81	Titus emperor
AD 79–81	Publication of Bellum Judaicum
AD 81–96	Domitian emperor

c. AD 94   Publication of *Antiquitates Judaicae* and *Vita*
before AD 100   Publication of *Contra Apionem*

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Chapter 10

History and Inscriptions, Rome

Alison E. Cooley

The writing of history only emerged at Rome towards the end of the third century BC, when the senator Fabius Pictor composed in Greek the first history of Rome. It was, however, not the case that the Romans had no interest in history before then: as a general rule, history-writing makes only a comparatively small contribution to the development of historical consciousness, as illustrated in this volume's chapters on south Asia and Egypt. History-writing in the Greek and Roman worlds remained a literary pursuit that was rooted in rhetorical principles, but architecture, art, coins, drama, etymology, inscriptions, institutions, oral traditions, and topography also all interacted to shape the Romans' sense of their past.[1] These were not considered to be a form of *historia*; instead, they were *monumenta*, images and texts designed to preserve the memory of great deeds (*res gestae*).[2] This distinction has been clearly outlined by Nicholas Purcell:

What the comparative study of inventions of historiography demonstrates clearly is that the genre of literary historiography known to the Greeks as *historie* (technically, 'systematic enquiry') is only a rather small and stylized part of the whole universe of historical thinking…formal methods of representing and investigating the past in a literary milieu are, regularly, specialized outgrowths from a historical consciousness that takes much more diverse forms. Formal historiography can only be understood against the backdrop of a panoply of other expressions of 'historical consciousness'.[3]

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[1] Overview by Alison E. Cooley, 'Inscribing History at Rome', in ead. (ed.), *The Afterlife of Inscriptions* (London, 2000), 7–20, at pp. 7–9. Specific types of material discussed by Emilio Gabba, 'True History and False History in Classical Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 71 (1981), 50–62; Elizabeth Rawson, *Roman Culture and Society* (Oxford, 1991), 582–98; T. P. Wiseman, 'Monuments and the Roman Annalists', in I. S. Moxon, J. D. Smart, and A. J. Woodman (eds.), *Past Perspectives: Studies in Greek and Roman Historical Writing* (Cambridge, 1986), 87–100; T. P. Wiseman, *Historiography and Imagination* (Exeter, 1994); and Andrew Meadows and Jonathan Williams, 'Moneta and the Monuments: Coinage and Politics in Republican Rome', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 91 (2001), 27–49.

[2] On the concept of *monumentum*, see Mary Jaeger, *Livy's Written Rome* (Ann Arbor, 1997), ch.1; and Don Fowler, *Roman Constructions: Readings in Postmodern Latin* (Oxford, 2000), 193–217.

[3] Nicholas Purcell, 'Becoming Historical: The Roman Case', in David Braund and Christopher Gill (eds.), *Myth, History and Culture in Republican Rome: Studies in Honour of T.P. Wiseman* (Exeter, 2003), 12–40, at p. 16.

As a complement to other discussions in this volume of what the Romans would have understood to be 'history-writing' proper (notably by Uwe Walter and Ellen O'Gorman), this chapter sets out to analyze one characteristic feature of this backdrop: it focuses upon one type of evidence—inscriptions—and concentrates upon the city of Rome. It adopts a chronological approach, starting with the earliest known inscriptions from the city and concluding in Late Antiquity. It explores the interrelationship between the history of Rome itself and that of its dominant families and individuals, and how inscriptions were used to reinvent the past and to justify the emergence of autocracy. It ends by analyzing the role of inscriptions in reconciling the elite's pagan past and Christian present. Writing history through the medium of inscriptions did not create an objective historical record set in stone, but was a dynamic process subject to revisions, rewritings, and reinterpretations.

Inscriptions from archaic Rome are scarce. The *lapis niger* ('black stone') from the Roman Forum is the earliest surviving example, dating from roughly 600–580 BC. Otherwise, we depend upon the testimony of ancient authors who mention a handful of inscriptions from the sixth and fifth centuries BC, whose authenticity seems plausible. These include treaties, such as the one made between Rome and Carthage in the first year of the Republic (509 BC) cited by Polybius (3.22), and laws, such as the *lex Furia Pinaria* of 472 BC (Varro, in Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.13.21).[4] We can only guess at the role of publicly displayed inscriptions in moulding the Romans' historical consciousness in this earlier period, but they certainly played an important part in Rome's later historical traditions. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for example, writing towards the end of the first century BC, inadvertently used the *lapis niger* as evidence for three different episodes in Rome's distant past. He identified it as an inscription in Greek detailing the achievements of Romulus, first king of Rome (2.54.2), as an epitaph of Hostus Hostilius, grandfather of Tullus Hostilius, third king of Rome (3.1.2), and as the tomb of Faustulus, Romulus' foster-father (1.87.2–3). He did not realize that his different sources all related to the same monument.[5]

The word *monumentum* could refer not only to a 'monument' in the modern sense of the word, but also to anything that served as a reminder, including a place, a physical wound, or even a literary composition: according to one ancient definition (*Digest* 11.7.42), 'a monument in general is something produced for posterity for the sake of memory'. By the Augustan era it was commonplace for writers to claim that in contrast to mere physical *monumenta* that risked crumbling away, their own compositions were the true everlasting *monumenta*, and this motif may have originated with the celebrated poet Ennius in the second

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[4] Tim Cornell, 'The Tyranny of the Evidence: A Discussion of the Possible Uses of Literacy in Etruria and Latium in the Archaic Age,' in J. H. Humphrey (ed.), *Literacy in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor, 1991), 7–33; and C. Ampolo, 'La storiografia su Roma arcaica e i documenti', in Emilio Gabba (ed.), *Tria Corda* (Como, 1983), 9–26.

[5] Cornell, 'The Tyranny of the Evidence', 27–30; and Ampolo, 'La storiografia su Roma arcaica', 19–26.

century BC.[6] Horace (*Odes* 3.30.1) boasted that his odes were destined to be 'a monument more long-lasting than bronze', whilst Ovid (*Tristia* 3.3.59–78) claimed to put his trust in his poetry rather than in an epitaph for his future reputation. The success of this conceit depended upon the more usual association of a physical *monumentum* with adjectives meaning 'eternal', 'long-lasting', 'immortal', 'everlasting'. A *monumentum* was not conceived of as simply having a passive commemorative function, but was considered to have a didactic purpose, especially in terms of offering moral instruction. For Livy, his history was intended both to commemorate the achievements of past Romans, and also to offer guidance to present and future generations. Inscriptions too embraced this ideal.

During the Republic, the Romans' sense of the past was based upon the history of Rome's office-holding elite. The history of Rome was in effect synonymous with the history of its leading families, whose achievements were Rome's successes.[7] This may be illustrated by the tomb of one of Rome's most prominent families, the Cornelii Scipiones, who included the conquerors of Hannibal and Seleucid Antiochus III. Their tomb on the Appian Way just outside Rome illustrates how inscriptions could shape both family history and the history of Rome.[8]

The tomb consists of two chambers. The larger of these was built shortly after the construction of the Appian Way in 312 BC, and had space for just over thirty sarcophagi. This tomb marked a new phase in the family's self-representation, superseding an earlier tomb, located on the Ardeatine Way.[9] The earliest burial in the new tomb was that of Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus and probably dates from about 280 BC. His sarcophagus was placed in the tomb's most prestigious location, immediately opposite its entrance. It bore two inscriptions—one painted upon its lid, simply identifying the deceased, and another, a more elaborate inscription in verse, carved upon its front, giving an account of his virtues and achievements: 'Cornelius Lucius Scipio Barbatus, born of his father Gnaeus, a brave man and wise, whose good looks were exactly equal to his moral excellence; who was consul, censor, and aedile among you; he captured Taurasia and Cisauna in Samnium, he subdues the whole of Loucana and brings back hostages'.[10]

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[6] J. Moles, 'Livy's Preface', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 39 (1993), 141–68, at pp. 154–5.

[7] Harriet I. Flower, *The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace and Oblivion in Roman Political Culture* (Chapel Hill, 2006), 45–53.

[8] F. Coarelli, *Il sepolcro degli Scipioni a Roma* (Rome, 1988); F. Zevi, 'Sepulcrum (Corneliorum) Scipionum', in Eva Margareta Steinby (ed.), *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, vol. 4 (Rome, 1999), 281–5; Harriet I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford, 1996), 159–80; and ead., *The Art of Forgetting*, 56–7.

[9] *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (= CIL)* I² 2834–35; Coarelli, *Il sepolcro degli Scipioni*, 13; and P. Kruschwitz, *Carmina Saturnia Epigraphica* (Stuttgart, 2002), 33 n. 88.

[10] *Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae (= ILLRP)* 309 = *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae (= ILS)* 1 = *CIL* I² 7. Flower, *Ancestor Masks*, 326 Appendix B, I 1; and Coarelli, Il sepolcro degli Scipioni, 16–18.

The sarcophagus of Barbatus' son, Lucius Cornelius Scipio, displays an inscription which illustrates how the Scipiones were competing with other elite families, in making claims about their family's primacy. The verse inscription on the front of his sarcophagus begins with the claim 'Most Romans agree that this one man was the best of the good men'.[11] Near the tomb of the Scipiones was the family tomb of the Calatini. Here the epitaph of A. Atilius Calatinus, a contemporary of Barbatus' son (consul, 258 and 254 BC), proclaimed him too to be the foremost Roman, in a phrase strikingly reminiscent of that used of L. Cornelius Scipio: 'Most families agree that this man was foremost of the people'.[12] In this way, the Scipiones used their epitaphs to project an image of their family that might well have been contested by others.

In the mid second century BC, a secondary, smaller chamber was added onto the original one, which by then had run out of space, accommodating a further five or six sarcophagi. At the same time, a monumental facade was added to the tomb, with a podium decorated with paintings depicting the family's military victories. These modifications coincided with the apogee of the family's dominance at Rome, and are thought to have been the work of Scipio Aemilianus, who died in 129 BC.

Detailed analysis of the inscriptions found in the tomb illustrates how the family shaped its image, changing it over the generations: 'these texts illustrate how family traditions were rewritten or expanded, even in a private setting'.[13] The verse inscription on Barbatus' tomb, for example, originally contained an additional line and a half at its start, which have been erased. The most attractive interpretation is that the opening words of the inscription contained some claim about Barbatus which later generations of the family no longer wished to promote.[14] Family history is also manipulated in another epitaph, that of a Publius Cornelius Scipio, whose premature demise resulted in his father, Publius Cornelius Scipio, adopting as his son the young Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus.[15] His epitaph originally lamented the fact that he had died before fulfilling his potential ('Death brought it about that all your accomplishments were brief: office-holding, reputation and excellence, glory and talent. If you

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[11] *ILLRP* 310 = *ILS* 3 = *CIL* I² 9. Flower, *Ancestor Masks*, 326–27 Appendix B, I 2; and Coarelli, *Il sepolcro degli Scipioni*, 18.

[12] Cicero, *Elder Cato on Old Age* 17.61:'*hunc unum plurimae consentiunt gentes populi primarium fuisse virum.*' *notum est carmen incisum in sepulcro.* Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 1.7.13.

[13] Flower, *Ancestor Masks*, 167.

[14] Ibid., 175–7. The physical appearance of the inscription supports this view, rather than the one that an early, short inscription had been completely erased, and replaced by the verse epitaph in the early second century BC: Kruschwitz, *Carmina Saturnia Epigraphica*, 32–4, with n. 93; contra Coarelli, *Il sepolcro degli Scipioni*, 17.

[15] G. V. Sumner, *The Orators in Cicero's* Brutus (Toronto, 1973), 35–7; supported by T. Robert S. Broughton, *Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, vol. 3 (Atlanta, 1986), 70; contra Coarelli, *Il sepolcro degli Scipioni*, 9, 20.

had been allowed to exercise these in a long life, you would easily have surpassed the glory of your ancestors by your achievements. Wherefore, the earth happily receives you in her lap, Publius Scipio, son of Publius Cornelius'), but at a later stage, a further line was added to its start declaring that he had held the priestly office of *flamen Dialis* ('You who wore the glorious cap of Jupiter's priest').[16] He probably held the priesthood—itself an appointment for life—for only a year or two before his death, in 176/75 BC. This priesthood of Jupiter imposed idiosyncratic conditions of service on its holder, including a prohibition on holding political office. By adding this first line, therefore, the whole tone of the inscription is altered, now explaining the deceased's rather lacklustre career by his priesthood.

By the first century BC, the family of the Cornelii Scipiones had disappeared, but two later epitaphs from the first century AD were found in the tomb, showing that a less distinguished branch of the Cornelii had taken over the tomb, and wished to associate themselves with one of the pre-eminent families of Rome's past.[17] By the third/fourth centuries AD, however, the family tomb ceased to have any significance for anyone, and had a house built on top of it. The memory and history of the Scipiones no longer held any meaning.

Along with tombs, houses were the other main context in which families created their own histories. The main reception room (*atrium*) of an aristocratic house presented to viewers a series of *monumenta*, which offered a history of that family's illustrious past. Alongside statues and inscriptions on stone and bronze were cupboards displaying wax masks of ancestors, with brief inscriptions explaining who they were, and paintings depicting their great achievements.[18] Outsiders too could contribute to shaping a family's sense of identity. Clients—individuals and communities who wished to show their gratitude to a patron—commonly set up statues in the honorand's house. Private houses and suburban villas belonging to the senatorial elite could become veritable statue galleries. Thirteen statue bases for various members of the Julii Aspri, for example, were found in their villa at Grottaferrata, set up by individuals and provinces in the lifetimes of the honorands.[19] Although such statues were largely of significance to contemporary viewers, they were also concerned, like all *monumenta*, with shaping the way in which that individual and his or her family might be remembered in the future. This aim is sometimes explicitly acknowledged, as on a base dedicated by the people of Ravenna to Vulcacius Rufinus (consul, AD 347), from his house on the Quirinal: 'the people of Ravenna

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[16] *ILLRP* 311 = *ILS* 4 = *CIL* I² 10. Flower, *Ancestor Masks*, 326 App. B, I 3; and Coarelli, *Il sepolcro degli Scipioni*, 20.

[17] Cornelia Gaetulica: *CIL* VI 1392, *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*² (=*PIR*) C 1390; Iunius Silanus: *CIL* VI 1439, *PIR*² I 836. Coarelli, *Il sepolcro degli Scipioni*, 23–4.

[18] Flower, *Ancestor Masks*, ch. 7.

[19] Werner Eck, *Tra epigrafia prosopografia e archeologia* (Rome, 1996), 304.

dedicated a monument of everlasting memory in the vestibule of the house by the homage of a statue'.[20]

In most cases, the shaping of family history was a gradual process, with new generations being commemorated in piecemeal fashion during their own life-times. A departure from this norm, however, is found in a villa a few miles to the north of Rome, at Lucus Feroniae, which belonged to one of Rome's distin-guished families, the Volusii Saturnini.[21] At least two generations were commem-orated side by side at a single moment, when inscriptions were set up in the household shrine. First, we find L. Volusius Saturninus. His inscription records in detail the nine statues set up in his honour at various locations around Rome on his death aged 93 in AD 56, whilst prefect of the city of Rome. A fragmentary inscription found in the Roman Forum indicates that the inscription from the villa echoed the wording of the senatorial decree passed in his honour, which was also inscribed beneath the nine statues in Rome.[22] Next to him was commem-orated his son, Q. Volusius Saturninus, consul in AD 56. The layout of the shrine makes it likely that at least two other generations of the family were also repre-sented, all of them deceased ancestors, and the inscriptions may have accompa-nied busts of the honorands. This context suggests that they played some part in ceremonies relating to ancestor cult. The inscriptions belong to the final quarter of the first century AD, and we do not know what prompted these inscriptions to be set up so long after their honorands had died; but they provide much more detail than was necessary merely to identify the men concerned, so it clearly mattered to later generations of the family to create, for their own benefit, a particular picture of their ancestors' achievements. Members of the family remained prominent in Roman politics into the AD 90s, with two consuls in AD 92 and 95, but after that the family disappears from the historical record. The villa thus offers some insight into the value placed upon family history by an aristocratic family, and the role played by inscriptions in moulding its sense of history.

Much of Rome's history, therefore, presented itself through the filter of the city's dominant families. Another way of viewing its history was as a sequence of individual magistrates. The Romans believed that their earliest historical records were the 'chronicles of the highest priest' (*annales maximi*), compiled by the *pontifex maximus*.[23] These listed year by year the names of magistrates, and portents such as eclipses. The successor to these lists appears to have been the *fasti*, or calendars. Two sets of *fasti* were inscribed upon a structure at the east

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[20] *CIL* VI 32051 = *ILS* 1237; *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire (= PLRE)* I Vulcacius Rufinus 25.

[21] *Année Epigraphique* (= *AE*) (1972), 174–6; S. Panciera, 'Volusiana: Appunti epigrafici sui Volusii', in Mary T. Boatwright et al. (eds.), *I Volusii Saturnini: Una famiglia romana della prima età imperiale* (Bari, 1982), 83–95, at p. 87; and Eck, *Tra epigrafia prosopografia e archeologia*, 125–45, 299–301.

[22] *AE* (1982) 63 and *CIL* VI 41075a.   [23] Cicero, *On Oratory* 2.51.

end of the Roman Forum, on a series of tablets and pilasters. The original location of these inscriptions is hotly disputed, but the most attractive hypothesis is that they were displayed on the walls of the *regia*, home of the *pontifex maximus*, outside which the *annales maximi* had traditionally been published on whiteboards.[24] The consular *fasti* start with the kings of Rome and the lengths of their reigns, followed by the annually appointed consuls. The triumphal *fasti* list the names of generals who have celebrated a triumph, together with details of their defeated foes, starting with Romulus, legendary founder of Rome.[25] Together, these lists presented the skeletal framework of a history of Rome at home and abroad, in peacetime and in time of war.

The inscriptions were created as historical monuments, with the consular *fasti* perhaps being engraved when the *regia* was rebuilt in 36 BC, and the triumphal *fasti* being added at some point between 19 and 12 BC. The consular list comes to an end in AD 13, whilst the triumphal list is brought to a close in 19 BC with Cornelius Balbus, the last general outside the imperial family to be awarded a triumph. The end-points of both lists imply that the culmination of Rome's history occurred under Augustus. In the case of the triumphal *fasti*, the inscription appears to have been designed so as to fill up the space made available by the four pilasters: no further triumphs were to be awarded, perhaps reflecting an implicit claim that Rome's empire was now worldwide in extent. The decision not to continue inscribing the names of consuls after the death of Augustus reflects the perception that consuls were no longer of significance to the history of Rome; even as a dating formula, they were being challenged by the alternative system of dating according to the emperor's year of tribunician power. The abandonment of consular *fasti* foreshadows the similar tension found in Tacitus' annalistic histories, where he chose to structure his narrative year by year, noting the change of consuls on the first of January. In histories composed during the Republic, this narrative structure suited events, since the two consuls were Rome's chief magistrates, who had a huge impact upon events during their year in office. Under the rule of emperors, however, consuls had little influence, and Tacitus exploited a traditional historical framework in order to emphasize how little sense a year-by-year account of Roman history actually made once an emperor was in continuous power.[26]

[24] C. J. Simpson, 'The Original Site of the *Fasti Capitolini*', *Historia*, 42 (1993), 61–81; contra the *fornix Fabianus*: E. M. Steinby, 'Il lato orientale del Foro Romano: Proposte di lettura', *Arctos*, 21 (1987), 139–84, at pp. 156–65. Other attempts to associate the *fasti* with an Augustan arch— E. Nedergaard, 'Facts and Fiction about the Fasti Capitolini', *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici*, 27 (2001), 107–27; and C. B. Rose, 'The Parthians in Augustan Rome', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 109 (2005), 21–75, at pp. 30–3—do not convince because of the chronology surrounding the erasure and reinscription of Antony's name (see further below).

[25] A. Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Italiae*, vol. 13, fasc. 1: *Fasti consulares et triumphales* (Rome, 1947).

[26] Judith Ginsburg, *Tradition and Theme in the Annals of Tacitus* (New York, 1981).

The privileged status of the consular *fasti* as historical records is reflected by resistance towards erasing any names from them. One way in which Romans sometimes changed the historical record was by erasing words from an inscription—particularly the name of an individual who had fallen from political favour, such as an assassinated emperor.[27] Erasing part of an inscription belongs to a wider sphere of memory sanctions, by which someone might be removed from a *monumentum*, whether coin, inscription, statue, or building. One of the earliest examples of a Roman suffering extensive sanctions against his memory was the triumvir Marcus Antonius.[28] Following his defeat by the future Augustus at Actium and Alexandria in 31/30 BC, he suffered a range of sanctions, including the destruction of statues, the erasure of his name from inscriptions, the designation of his birthday as a day of ill omen, and a ban on his family using his *praenomen* Marcus. The name Marcus Antonius was erased three times from the consular *fasti*—twice where it referred to his homonymous grandfather, and once where it referred to Antony. In each of these cases, however, the name was later reinscribed on top of the erasure, since it was decided that the continuity of the historical record was more important than the punishment of an individual.[29] By contrast, Antony's name appears twice in the triumphal *fasti* without suffering an erasure. This supports the idea that the triumphal list was inscribed later than the consular one, after the decision to preserve Antony's name in *fasti* had already been made.

Several of the sanctions suffered by Antony were later imposed upon the memory of the senator Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, who was found guilty of treason against the Emperor Tiberius in AD 20.[30] Following his suicide, Tiberius asked the senate to determine 'how the case of Gnaeus Piso, Senior was regarded, and whether in their view he took his own life deservedly'.[31] Both emperor and senate were eager to control how Piso's trial and condemnation would be viewed by both contemporaries and future generations, not least given the popular unrest surrounding his trial. The senate consequently drafted a composite document incorporating a number of senatorial decrees, which it required to be made public on inscriptions throughout the Roman Empire:

so that the course of the proceedings as a whole may be handed down more easily to the memory of future generations, and so that they may know what the senate's judgement

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[27] Flower, *The Art of Forgetting*, ch. 9. [28] Ibid., 116–17.

[29] Cf. Tacitus, *Annals* 3.18.1.

[30] Werner Eck, Antonio Caballos, and Fernando Fernández, *Das Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* (Munich, 1996) (= *SCPP*); M. Griffin, 'The Senate's Story', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 87 (1997), 249–63; Flower, *Ancestor Masks*, 23–31; Alison E. Cooley, 'The Moralizing Message of the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre*', *Greece and Rome*, 45 (1998) 199–212; special issue on the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre*', *American Journal of Philology*, 120:1 (1999); and G. Rowe, *Princes and Political Cultures* (Ann Arbor, 2002).

[31] *SCPP* ll.6–7.

was concerning the unique self-control of Germanicus Caesar and the crimes of Gnaeus Piso Senior, the senate has decided that…this decree of the senate should be inscribed on bronze and set up in the busiest city of each province, in the busiest place of the city, and that likewise this decree of the senate should be set up beside the standards in each legion's permanent headquarters.[32]

Multiple copies of this text have been found in the Spanish province of Baetica. Piso had also been accused of murdering Tiberius' heir, Germanicus, but was apparently cleared of that charge. Less than a year earlier, the senate had also issued instructions for the engraving upon bronze of a senatorial decree and law concerned with perpetuating the memory of Germanicus himself. Fragments of this text too have been found in Italy and Baetica. Such active promulgation of inscriptions was unusual, but illustrates how the senate tried to disseminate an official version of events. The senate was not attempting to eradicate all memory of Piso from the historical record.[33] Far from it. Instead, it demonized him, removing him from family history, and setting him beyond the pale of civilized Roman society. Piso's villainy was firmly ascribed to his uniquely flawed character. The senate's unstated aim was presumably to suggest that similar treasonous behaviour on the part of any other Roman was unthinkable. The senate was not to know that Tacitus would later provide an alternative version of the same events in which he 'characteristically converts the monument's monotonous confidence into discrepancy and doubt'.[34]

With the advent of rule by emperors, the history of the state could be repackaged as the history not of various competing families, nor even of competing individuals, but of a single dominant individual. This change was brought about by Augustus, who composed a long account of his achievements, the *Res Gestae divi Augusti*, with the instruction that it should be engraved upon bronze and set up outside his Mausoleum.[35] This original inscription does not survive, but most of its text can be reconstructed from copies found in three cities of Galatia. Augustus' new position of dominance in the state is expressed through the inscription's content, style, and syntax. In the course of his long text, he does not mention other Romans by name, except as elements making up dating formulae, such as 'in the consulship of Marcus Vinicius and Quintus Lucretius, and later of Publius Lentulus and Gnaeus Lentulus, and thirdly of Paullus Fabius Maximus and Quintus Tubero'.[36] Even where he names members of his family—his

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[32] *SCPP* ll.165–72.

[33] J. Bodel, 'Punishing Piso', *American Journal of Philology*, 120 (1999) 43–64, esp. p. 44.

[34] A. J. Woodman and R. H. Martin, *The Annals of Tacitus: Book 3* (Cambridge, 1996), 114–18, citation from p. 117; R. J. A. Talbert, 'Tacitus and the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre*', *American Journal of Philology*, 120 (1999), 89–97; and C. Damon, 'The Trial of Cn. Piso in Tacitus' *Annals* and the *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre*: New Light on Narrative Technique', *American Journal of Philology*, 120 (1999), 143–62.

[35] Dio Cassius 56.33.1; and Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 101.4. Alison E. Cooley, *Res Gestae divi Augusti* (Cambridge, 2009).

[36] *RGDA* 6.1.

adopted sons, Gaius and Lucius; his son-in-law, Marcellus; and his stepson/ adopted son, Tiberius—they are merely secondary agents. He mentions the honours given to Gaius and Lucius, for example, as honours really intended for him, 'as a way of honouring me'; Marcellus is named because of the theatre built in his name by Augustus; and Gaius and Tiberius are mentioned as acting as Augustus' subordinate representatives when engaging in warfare and foreign affairs.[37] The exception is Agrippa, who alone achieves some parity with Augustus as his colleague on various occasions. The whole text is composed in the first person, and personal pronouns abound. These syntactical features subtly achieve more than simply keeping Augustus to the forefront of the reader's attention: they unambiguously convey the message of Augustus' centrality to the state. The abundance of personal pronouns makes it easy to underestimate the revolutionary quality of Augustus speaking of 'my army' and 'my fleet'. His description of his veterans as being 'my soldiers' would have been unobjectionable, given the personal relationship between troops and their commander, but to extend this to the whole army and fleet of the Roman state was an astounding sign of how successfully Augustus had taken over control of Rome's military forces. Similarly, he displaces the senate and people of Rome as the target of foreign embassies. In speaking of the friendship enjoyed by foreign kings and envoys with Rome, Augustus first describes it as 'friendship with me and the Roman people', but later alludes to 'our friendship', perhaps in a deliberately vague fashion.[38] An anaphoric sequence, in which the start of each successive chapter focuses on Augustus, leaves no doubt about the marginalization of senate and people of Rome, and about whom non-Romans perceived to be really in charge at Rome: 'To me were sent often embassies of kings from India...To me as suppliants fled...From me the Parthian and Median peoples received kings'.[39]

In addition to the wholesale reinvention of Rome's history as centred upon a single individual, there are many other aspects of the text which illustrate how Augustus manipulated the historical record.[40] One of the best examples is how he represents his initial rise to power, since that is arguably the most problematic aspect of his career.[41] By selective editing and clever use of literary allusions, Augustus opens his account by depicting his early career as one fully supported by the senate, glossing over the difficulties he faced in assuming a role as Julius Caesar's heir:

Aged nineteen years old I mustered an army on my personal instigation and at my personal expense, and with it I liberated the state, which had been oppressed by a despotic faction. For this reason the senate passed honorific decrees admitting me to its body in the consulship of Gaius Pansa and Aulus Hirtius, at the same time giving me

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[37] *RGDA* 14.1, 27.2.   [38] *RGDA* 26.4; 32.2.   [39] *RGDA* 31.1, 32.1, 33.
[40] R. Ridley, *The Emperor's Retrospect* (Leuven/Dudley, Mass., 2003).
[41] R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939).

consular precedence in stating my opinion, and it gave me official power. To prevent the state from suffering harm, it ordered me as *propraetor* to take precautions together with the consuls. In this same year, moreover, the people appointed me consul, after both consuls had fallen in war, and *triumvir* for settling the state.[42]

To start with, Augustus foreshortens events, ignoring the first few months following Julius Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March, when his position at Rome was extremely tenuous, and starting only after he had turned 19 years old on 23 September 44 BC. By explicitly mentioning his age, Augustus recalls other youthful champions of Rome: notably Scipio Africanus, who had been granted the powers of a consul when aged only 24, without having previously served as either *consul* or *praetor*; and Pompey, who at the age of 23 had raised a private army in support of Sulla. In general, the text is notable for its conciseness, and Augustus uses adjectives sparingly. All the more striking, then, that adjectives in the first two chapters encourage a positive interpretation of his early career. Above all, the repetition of 'on my *personal* instigation and at my *personal* expense' makes clear that his earliest interventions on behalf of the state were as a private citizen, and invites us to make comparisons with other great Romans who had acted in a similar capacity: notably L. Brutus (who expelled the Tarquins from Rome and thus became founder of the Republic), P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica (thought to have rescued the state from the tyranny of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 BC), and Pompey (whose support of Sulla is mentioned above). This obscures the fact that at the same time as his actions described at the opening of Chapter 1, he had failed to consolidate his position at Rome in November by persuading Caesar's veterans to fight against Antony, but had then induced two of Antony's legions to join him. This act of suborning the troops of a current consul was illegal, but his actions received retrospective sanction as soon as Antony ceased to hold the consulship in January 43 BC. Augustus' mentioning of the senate's honorific decrees also hides the fact that this was retrospective sanctioning of illegal acts. Finally, in describing his election as consul, he omits the fact that he met with opposition from the senate and ended up marching upon Rome at the head of his army in order to extort this appointment by threats of violence.[43]

Through his composition of the *Res Gestae* and instructions for its publication, Augustus intended his version of events to be preserved for all time. The *Res Gestae*, however, was merely the culmination after his death of Augustus' attempts to influence how his reign would be viewed by future generations, and had been foreshadowed some years earlier by other inscribed *monumenta* whose aim was to insert Augustus into a flattering historical context. The most outstanding example is the collection of historical inscriptions created to accompany statues of great Romans set up by Augustus in the Forum that he dedicated

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[42] *RGDA* 1.   [43] Cooley, *Res Gestae divi Augusti*, ad loc.

in 2 BC.[44] In contrast to usual practice, whereby inscriptions commemorated either the living or the recently deceased, and were set up piecemeal over time, Augustus put in place at a single moment a sequence of statues representing the great men of Rome who had brought the empire to its current expanse. The unusual historicizing flavour of the inscriptions was emphasized by their use of archaic language.[45] This contributed to the illusion that the inscriptions were genuine historical documents. The Forum was a vast historical monument, whose juxtaposition of inscriptions, statues, and architecture elevated Augustus' position in Roman society, and represented him as the preordained culmination of Rome's history.

The Forum was dominated at one end by the Temple of Mars the Avenger. This was flanked by colonnades on either side, which opened out into two large semicircular apses. Statues of Aeneas and Romulus held pride of place in the centre of these apses, and on either side of them stood further statues. More statues continued in front of the columns of the porticoes. In the centre of the Forum stood Augustus in a chariot, honoured as 'father of the country'.[46] The selection of whom to honour with a statue in Augustus' Forum, and with what words to commemorate their achievements, was calculated to reinvent Rome's past in support of Augustus' current dominance. Many of the men honoured were *triumphatores*—generals who had won a triumph for outstanding military victories—but the Forum is unlikely to have held statues of all *triumphatores*, who numbered in excess of 230. The statues did not merely reproduce the triumphal *fasti* in an artistic medium. An obvious point was made by placing a statue of Julius Caesar in the Temple of Mars rather than in the Forum: now deified, he no longer belonged alongside mortals. The inclusion of Appius Claudius Caecus, who was not a *triumphator*, also demonstrates that celebration of a triumph was not the only criterion used to determine who was represented by a statue in the Forum.[47] The inscriptions were not objective records of the careers of the honorands—after all, some of them, such as those relating to Aeneas and Romulus, were essentially fictional accounts of legendary figures—nor did they simply

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[44] James C. Anderson, Jr., *The Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora* (Brussels, 1984), ch. 2; M. Bonnefond, 'Transferts de functions et mutation idéologique: Le Capitole et le Forum d'Auguste', in *L'Urbs: Espace urbain et histoire* (Rome, 1987), 251–78; J. Ganzert and V. Kockel, 'Augustus Forum und Mars-Ultor-Tempel', in *Kaiser Augustus und die verlorene Republik* (Berlin, 1988), 149–99; Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor, 1988), 194–215; T. J. Luce, 'Livy, Augustus, and the Forum Augustum', in Kurt A. Raaflaub and Mark Toher (eds.), *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1990), 123–38; Jane DeRose Evans, *The Art of Persuasion: Political Propaganda from Aeneas to Brutus* (Ann Arbor, 1992), ch. 6; V. Kockel, 'Forum Augustum', in Eva Margareta Steinby (ed.), *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1995), 289–95; Flower, *Ancestor Masks*, 224–36; and Joseph Geiger, *The First Hall of Fame* (Leiden, 2008). Inscriptions: A. Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Italiae*, vol. 13, fasc. 3: *Elogia* (Rome, 1937).

[45] For example, *ex ieis* (Marius, no. 17); *curai sibi habuit* (L. Albinius, no. 11).

[46] *RGDA* 35.1.

[47] Suetonius, *Life of Augustus*, 31; and Degrassi, *Inscr. Ital.*, vol. 13, fasc. 3, 4.

repeat existing traditions. They did not, for example, always tally with Livy's accounts of the same careers, composed shortly before the Forum was created.[48] Instead, the heroes were recast in parts that befitted their new role as props for Augustus' regime. A striking pattern emerges whereby these famous Romans are described in terms that make them precedents for Augustus' dominance in the state: we find examples of outstanding individuals who had held office before legally entitled to do so by their age, implicitly excusing the rather dubious circumstances under which Augustus first acquired power at Rome (briefly discussed above).[49] In many cases the extraordinary powers, offices, and titles held by the leading men foreshadow those held by Augustus. Their interests also reflect those of Augustus. For instance, L. Albinius is celebrated for his strenuous efforts in maintaining Rome's religious rites during the Gallic attack on the city: 'when Gauls were besieging the Capitol, he led the Vestal Virgins to Caere; there he took care to ensure that the rites and solemn rituals should not be interrupted, and took the rites that he had revived and virgins back to Rome'.[50] This brings to mind Augustus' depiction of himself as protector and restorer of Rome's cults.[51] Overall, the inscriptions in Augustus' Forum justified the fact that Rome was now dominated by a single individual, and supported some of the measures taken by him in trying to reinvigorate Roman society after the long years of civil war. Augustus' contention at the end of his life that he had held no magistracies inconsonant with Rome's traditions could be supported precisely by pointing to the inscriptions in his Forum.[52]

These statues of famous Romans were positioned down the right-hand side of the Forum, 'each one a reflection at some point of Augustus' official presentation of himself'.[53] Opposite them, down the left-hand side of the Forum, was the 'Julian portico', honouring alleged ancestors of Augustus. Augustus' own family of birth—the Octavii—had no famous names in it, and his family of adoption—the Julii—promoted itself by fabricating specious claims to remote ancestors descended from Aeneas, via his son Ascanius/Iulus. Consequently, this 'Julian portico' contained kings of Alba Longa descended from Aeneas alongside members of the Julian family, including the recently deceased Marcellus and Drusus (not actually Julians, but members of Augustus' family). The portico advanced the claim that the Julian family, through Aeneas, could be seen as the ultimate founders of Rome— a claim which also underlay Vergil's *Aeneid*, and represented Augustus as completing the full circle of history, resuming his fated role as refounder of Rome.[54]

[48] Degrassi, *Inscr. Ital.* XIII.iii, 6 n. 81; Luce, 'Livy, Augustus, and the Forum Augustum'.

[49] Anderson, *Historical Topography*, 80–8.

[50] Degrassi, *Inscr. Ital.*, vol. 13, fasc. 3, no. 11 = *CIL* VI 31583.

[51] John Scheid, 'Augustus and Roman Religion: Continuity, Conservatism, and Innovation', in Karl Galinsky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge, 2005), 175–93.

[52] *RGDA* 6.1.   [53] Anderson, *Historical Topography*, 85.

[54] Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 6 vv.788–800; and contrast Livy's undercutting (1.1) of the Julian family's claim to be descended from Aeneas' son.

The overall effect of this display of statues would have been to recall the traditional aristocratic practice of displaying wax images of distinguished ancestors in houses' *atria*. Augustus' Forum was both a public space and an echo of the private sphere of the *atrium*, but, in accordance with his exceptional position in the state, he appropriated the ancestors of other families (and did so again at his funeral procession).[55] Furthermore, Augustus transferred from the symbolic centre of Rome, the Capitol, to a peripheral location on the Field of Mars, statues that had been set up in honour of various Romans in the past. The net result of his interventions in the fabric of Rome was that he replaced the statues which had been set up by families or by public decree on the Capitol with statues in his Forum whose text and context he controlled.[56] Even if we might feel some scepticism at the report that Augustus himself composed the inscriptions,[57] he surely approved of them, and issued an edict in which he invited comparison between himself, the heroes in the Forum, and future leaders of Rome:

Next after the immortal gods, he showed honour to the memory of the generals who had made the rule of the Roman People very great out of very little. And so he restored the buildings of each man with their inscriptions remaining on them and also dedicated statues of them all in triumphal garb in both porticoes of his Forum, declaring in an edict that he had done this so that he himself, in his lifetime, and Rome's leading men of subsequent ages, might be measured by citizens according to the standard of those men.[58]

Augustus' reinvention of the past was not limited to being expressed through the monumental appearance of his Forum, but also manifested itself through the ceremonies and rituals which were laid down as belonging to the Temple of Mars.[59] Even the centuries-old ceremony of marking the passing of a year by hammering a nail into the wall of the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter was transferred to the new Temple of Mars.[60]

In the early second century AD, the Forum built by Trajan replaced Augustus' Forum as the most impressive monumental civic centre at Rome. Best known today for Trajan's column, the complex also contained a porticoed piazza with semicircular apses, the Basilica Ulpia, and a library. It continued to flourish for centuries, even after Rome ceased to be the sole capital of the empire. In the mid fourth century, three decades after the foundation of the rival capital at Constantinople, Constantius II gazed in amazement at the complex on his first

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[55] Perhaps the main area of Augustus' Forum was called an *atrium*, given that the main piazza of Trajan's Forum, which imitated the architectural design of Augustus' Forum, was called *atrium* by Ammianus Marcellinus, 16.10.15. Augustus' funeral procession: Dio Cassius 56.34; and H. T. Rowell, 'The Forum and funeral *imagines* of Augustus', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 17 (1940), 131–43.

[56] Suetonius, *Life of Caligula* 34.2; and Cooley, 'Inscribing History at Rome', 16–17.

[57] Pliny, *Natural History* 22.13.   [58] Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 31.5.

[59] Dio Cass. 55.10; Anderson, *Historical Topography*, 88–97; and Bonnefond, 'Transferts de functions'.

[60] Cincius, apud Livy 7.3.5; and Dio Cassius 55.10.4.

visit to Rome, and even at the end of the eighth century the complex still inspired admiration, perhaps only finally succumbing to an earthquake in AD 801.[61] At first glance it seems appropriate to draw a sharp distinction between the statues on display in the two fora. Whereas the honorific statues set up in Augustus' Forum originally belonged to a unified programme, presenting a coherent picture of Rome's past, the statues in Trajan's Forum were set up over many centuries, starting with Trajan himself in AD 112, to commemorate illustrious Romans in their own times.[62] Nevertheless, a significant number of inscribed statue bases set up during the fourth and fifth centuries AD reveal a striking preoccupation with the historical record, past and future.

First, some of the inscriptions in Trajan's Forum show how Rome's elite in this period alluded to Rome's past as 'ancient'—a golden age of virtue and nobility to which only its most distinguished contemporaries could hope to be true successors. For example, the inscription in honour of Petronius Maximus from AD 421 mentions his 'nobility inherited from his ancestors and forefathers', whilst in AD 382/3, Anicius Auchenius Bassus was praised for having restored the 'distinction of his family celebrated in pages of his forefathers and ancestors in the calendar'.[63] At the same time, the reasons given for commemorating honorands with statues change significantly. Whereas statues in this Forum initially celebrated military men, such as M. Claudius Fronto who was killed in battle at the end of a glittering military career,[64] by the fourth century, honorands were as likely to be praised for their literary abilities as for their service in the army, with political virtues and literary accomplishments becoming more prominent in honorific inscriptions.[65] The inscription honouring Flavius Merobaudes in AD 435 praises him at some length for his accomplishments as both soldier and poet, observing that he pursued literary activities even when on campaign, and presents him as an exemplar who combines ancient nobility with new glory:

To Flavius Merobaudes, a man who is as valiant as he is learned, distinguished as much for performing praiseworthy deeds as for praising the deeds of others...he exercised his natural capacity for bravery as much as for learning equally with pen and sword...(the emperors set up the statue) rewarding in a man of ancient nobility and of new glory both his military diligence and his poetry.[66]

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[61] Ammianus Marcellinus 16.10.15–16; J. Packer, 'Forum Traiani', in E. M. Steinby, ed., *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1995), 348–56, at p. 349; James E. Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome: A Study of the Monuments in Brief* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 2001), 5–7.

[62] Trajan: *CIL* VI 959. Statues: Packer, 'Forum Traiani'; and Anderson, *Historical Topography*, 161–72.

[63] *CIL* VI 1749, ll.8–9; *PLRE* II Maximus 22. *CIL* VI 1679 = *ILS* 1262; *PLRE* I Bassus 11.

[64] M. Claudius Fronto: *CIL* VI 1377/ 41142 = *ILS* 1098, *c.* AD 170; and *PIR*[2] C874.

[65] V. Neri, 'L'elogio della cultura e l'elogio delle virtù politiche nell'epigrafia latina del IV secolo d. C.', *Epigraphica*, 43 (1981), 175–201; and Charles W. Hedrick, *History and Silence* (Austin, 2000), ch. 7.

[66] *CIL* VI 1724 = *ILS* 2950; and *PLRE* II Fl. Merobaudes.

The inscription furthermore observes that in the olden days the honour being given to Merobaudes—a bronze statue—was only rarely given to anyone, whether proven on campaign or the best of poets.[67] A few years earlier in AD 402, Claudian, the 'outstandingly glorious poet', was honoured with a statue, whose inscription plays with the contrast between literary and physical *monumenta* with which this chapter began, explaining that even though his poetry by itself is enough to secure his everlasting memory, the emperors Arcadius and Honorius have still ordered the setting up of a statue as supporting evidence.[68] This Latin inscription is then followed by four lines of Greek which compare him with the greatest ancient poets, Vergil and Homer. In the late fourth and first half of the fifth centuries, therefore, there appears to be a new explicit discourse of situating honorands within an historical continuum.

Another feature of the way in which inscriptions in the Forum were used to write history is the practice of reinscribing an inscription upon a base whose earlier text had been totally erased, and replacing the honorific statue. From the mid fourth century, such inscriptions were set up in an attempt to set the historical record straight. Even though the honorand might be long dead, it was considered important to restore the memory of individuals whose disgrace was no longer regarded as valid. For example, a statue of Flavius Eugenius was restored by Constantius II and Julian in AD 355/61. It had been set up earlier under Constans in AD 342/49, but then destroyed by supporters of Magnentius. By the time of the statue's restoration, Eugenius had been dead for over five years.[69] A few years later, in AD 364/7, the statue and inscription honouring Flavius Taurus were also restored in Trajan's Forum by the emperors Valentinian and Valens.[70] Having served as consul in AD 361 and praetorian prefect in AD 355–61, he was exiled in AD 363 for his failure to support Julian's bid to become emperor.[71] This reinscribed inscription is explicit about the emperors' aim: 'they ordered a gilded statue to be set up again for the everlasting memory of a distinguished man'.[72] The principle behind the use of inscriptions in Trajan's Forum during Late Antiquity to set straight the historical record is well illustrated in the case of Flavius Philippus, albeit in an inscription from Ephesos. The inscription preserves a letter sent by Constantius II to Marinus, governor of Asia, concerning his attempt to restore the reputation of Flavius Philippus posthumously by setting up gilded statues in his memory in all significant towns. Philippus had been sent by Constantius II as an envoy to Magnentius, ostensibly for peace negotiations, but had been detected trying to win soldiers away from the usurper, and was detained by Magnentius for having abused his position as envoy.

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[67] *CIL* VI 1724, ll. 12–14.
[68] *CIL* VI 1710, ll.4–13 = *ILS* 2949; and *PLRE* II Claudius Claudianus 5.
[69] *CIL* VI 1721 = *ILS* 1244; and *PLRE* I Flavius Eugenius 5.
[70] *CIL* VI 41336; and *PLRE* I Flavius Taurus 3.   [71] Ammianus Marcellinus 22.3.4.
[72] *CIL* VI 41336.

Constantius II did not realize this was the case, however, and withdrew his support from Philippus, who ended up dying at the hands of Magnentius. Some time after Philippus' death, however, Constantius II learnt the true story of his detention by Magnentius, and sent out a letter which ended: 'Therefore…it is fitting that monuments of devotion be raised in affluent cities for this great man, gilded statues be erected for the same…and let the remembrance of him in our republic be everlasting, who by his labours has always furthered the glory of our republic'.[73]

Other inscriptions in Trajan's Forum are explicit about their desire to preserve the memory of the men being honoured with statues. In the early/mid fifth century, Flavius Peregrinus Saturninus received a statue 'to adorn the memory of posterity with the contemplation of his exceptional merits'.[74] The most striking example is the statue set up in honour of Petronius Maximus in AD 421, intended to be 'an everlasting monument of his merits'.[75] The celebration and recording of one man's virtues was intended to inspire others to emulate his behaviour, as stated in the inscription honouring Flavius Olbius Auxentius Draucus, beneath the statue set up by Theodosius II and Valentinian III 'as a reward and commemoration of his virtues, through which exceptional uprightness is always prompted in the service of the state'.[76] To some extent, however, the obsession with memory is nothing new: such ideas implicitly underlay the setting up of inscribed *monumenta* at all periods. What is new in Late Antiquity is that inscriptions articulate ideas that had previously remained unstated. The tendency for honorific inscriptions in Late Antiquity to be more explicit than earlier ones about wanting to perpetuate someone's memory and about encouraging others to emulate the honorand's virtues is part of the wider picture whereby inscriptions of this period tend to become more verbose in general.[77] Nevertheless, a final example may suggest that there is more to say about the new prominence of concerns with establishing a correct historical record beyond merely commenting upon the stylistic and linguistic characteristics of late antique inscriptions.

Our last example—an inscription from AD 432 honouring Nicomachus Flavianus—brings together all of our themes.[78] Flavianus had supported the usurper Eugenius against Theodosius in AD 394, being appointed consul by him in that year; but when Eugenius failed, Flavianus had ended up committing suicide that

[73] *AE* 1967, 478; translation from L. J. Swift and J. H. Oliver, 'Constantius II on Flavius Philippus', *American Journal of Philology*, 83 (1962) 247–64, at pp. 249–50. Cf. *PLRE* I Flavius Philippus 7; and Zosimus 2.46–49.

[74] *CIL* VI 1727 ll.13–15 = *ILS* 1275; and *PLRE* II Fl. Peregrinus Saturninus 7.

[75] *CIL* VI 1749, ll.6–7 = *ILS* 809; and *PLRE* II Maximus 22.

[76] *CIL* VI 1725, ll.17–19 = *ILS* 1284.

[77] I. Kajanto, 'Un' analisi filologico-letteraria delle iscrizioni onorarie', *Epigraphica*, 33 (1971), 3–19; O. Salomies, 'Observations on the Development of the Style of Latin Honorific Inscriptions during the Empire', *Arctos*, 28 (1994), 63–106.

[78] *CIL* VI 1783 = *AE* 1971, 24 = *ILS* 2948; *PLRE* I Flavianus 15; and Hedrick, *History and Silence.*

same year. His property was confiscated, his name removed from the consular *fasti*, and his honorific statue and inscription in Trajan's Forum cancelled. Almost forty years later, in the year that his son (also Nicomachus Flavianus) was appointed praetorian prefect, an inscription was carved on top of an erased text and a statue was re-erected rehabilitating the father's memory.[79] The inscription starts with a dedication to Flavianus, together with a summary of his career, explaining that his monument is being restored for the honour of his son, and ends with a statement from his grandson that he has organized the setting up of the statue. In between, it contains a lengthy letter from Valentinian III and Theodosius II to the senate, explaining the significance of their rehabilitation of Flavianus senior. The emperors speak metaphorically of their actions as the correction of a manuscript, *emendatio*, according to which they present a new edition of Flavianus' career.[80] They begin,

To defend against the pitfalls of mankind's lot the dignity of men renowned and eminent in the state when corrupted to some extent by interpolations and to recall the recollection of a deceased man to eternal fame may be regarded as a correction, so to speak, of his fate, which is considered as a preliminary judgment and the greatest supplement [?] of a man's worth.[81]

This rewriting can be illustrated by comparing this text with an inscription set up to honour Flavianus by his grandson-in-law, probably eight years after his death, recording his career as follows: 'To Virius Nicomachus Flavianus, illustrious senator, quaestor, praetor, greater priest, consular of Sicily, vicar of Africa, quaestor at the palace, twice praetorian prefect, ordinary consul, most eloquent historian'.[82] Contrast this with his rewritten career: 'To Nicomachus Flavianus, consular of Sicily, vicar of Africa, quaestor at the court of the blessed Theodosius, twice praetorian prefect of Italy, Illyricum, and Africa'. His re-edited career inscription does not include Flavianus' minor magistracies at the start of his career, his consulship, or his priesthood. Omission of the consulship can be explained by the fact that he had been appointed by Eugenius and was never recognized in the post by Theodosius. I shall return to the possible significance of his omitted priesthood in a moment. The emperors also compare their actions with history-writing, alluding to the commemorative function of writing:

whatever we accomplish in restoration of the glorious [?] and the most reverend remembrance we all cherish of the elder Flavian, we do honour to our blessed grandfather if we recall to the monuments and inscriptions of his worth the man whom our grandfather desired to survive for us…Accordingly, rejoice with us, senators, in an excellent work of

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[79] Son: *PLRE* I Flavianus 14.   [80] Hedrick, *History and Silence*, ch. 6.
[81] Translation, ll.9–12, Hedrick, *History and Silence,* 2.
[82] *CIL* VI 1782, ll.1–7 = *ILS* 2947; from a private residence on the Caelian.

our reign, as you review it with us, and approve the restoration of the remembrance of the prestige of that senator both to you and to the country'.[83]

The historical self-consciousness of his emended honorific inscription, together with its revised version of his career, was especially suited to Flavianus, who had written annals, and was celebrated as 'most eloquent historian'.[84] Indeed, according to the inscription, Theodosius was particularly impressed by his annals. In the case of Flavianus, however, what was at stake was not just shifting political allegiances, but the fundamental shift from paganism to Christianity that occurred among the senatorial elite after AD 391, when Theodosius I enforced conversion. Flavianus had been a prominent pagan, and his son became one of those who converted. This example well illustrates the dilemma faced by Rome's senatorial elite during the early fifth century, when wholesale conversion to Christianity was still a relatively recent phenomenon, and it had to find a way of reconciling Rome's glorious past, based as it was on pagan practices, with its Christian present. Senators of the early fifth century were arguably even more conscious than their predecessors of their ancestral traditions, and of the need to come to terms with the shift from pagan antiquity to Christian present. They had to find a way of reconciling the discontinuity created by conversion to Christianity with their desire to paint a picture of the present as a seamless continuation of historical memory. This may explain why so many fifth-century inscriptions from Trajan's Forum are explicitly concerned with setting themselves into an historical continuum. It appears no coincidence that Flavianus' position as a pagan priest is not mentioned in his rehabilitation inscription.[85] Similarly, the religious affiliations of the poet Claudian—reputedly a pagan—are sidestepped in his honorific inscription of AD 402.[86] As Charles W. Hedrick has argued, 'the imperial letter's self-presentation as history and rehabilitation and *emendatio* is an attempt to explain and reconcile past and present. By providing a model for the transformation of the past into present, the letter suggests how the two can and do coexist'.[87]

   To conclude, what was recorded on inscriptions made a significant contribution to the development of historical consciousness in the city of Rome, writing history even though it was not, strictly speaking, history-writing. The common perception that inscriptions possessed the capacity to last for all time ensured that in cases where people wanted to generate a historical record, they chose to engrave a text on stone or bronze. As *monumenta*, inscriptions, even if not actually historical monuments at the time they were set up, were always concerned with influencing posterity's memory of events and people.

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   [83] Translation, ll. 13–18, 33–5; and Hedrick, *History and Silence* 2, 4.
   [84] *CIL* VI 1782 = *ILS* 2947.
   [85] Hedrick, *History and Silence*, ch. 3.
   [86] Described as *a Christi nomine alienus* by St Augustine, *City of God* 5.26; and inscription—*CIL* VI 1710.
   [87] Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 212.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

600–580 BC	Earliest surviving inscription at Rome (*lapis niger*)
509 BC	Roman Republic founded
44 BC	Assassination of Julius Caesar
31/30 BC	Defeat by the future Augustus of Antony at Actium and Alexandria
2 BC	Augustus' Forum dedicated
AD 14	Death of Augustus; *Res Gestae divi Augusti* published
AD 112	Trajan's Forum dedicated
AD 324	Constantinople founded
AD 391	Theodosius enforced conversion to Christianity at Rome
AD 432	Memory of Nicomachus Flavianus rehabilitated in Trajan's Forum

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Chapter 11

Annales and Analysis

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AUTHORS, BOOKS, GENRES: AN INTRODUCTORY SURVEY

Roman historical writing began around the end of the third century BC, when the senator Quintus Fabius Pictor composed a history of Rome.[1] We do not know the title of this work nor do we have a single original sentence, but thirty-two fragments give indications about its content. The work seems to have been rather unwieldy, but it set essential standards for its successors. From Fabius onward, it would always be the whole history of Rome that was told, from mythical precursors through Romulus' founding of the city to the present of each respective author. At first, the depictions were only written by senators and were based on practical experience in war and politics, the political class's privileged access to information, and also, partly, on (Greek) literary models. Fabius and his immediate successors, who unfortunately are no more than names for us,

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[1] *Die Frühen Römischen Historiker*, vol. 1: *Von Fabius Pictor bis Cn. Gellius*, ed. and trans. Hans Beck and Uwe Walter (2nd edn, Darmstadt, 2005) (hereafter cited as *FRH* i.), 55–136; and Uwe Walter, *Memoria und res publica: Zur Geschichtskultur der römischen Republik* (Frankfurt, 2004), 229–55. For general overviews, see C. S. Kraus and A. J. Woodman, *Latin Historians* (Oxford, 1997); Christopher Pelling, 'Historiography, Roman', in Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (eds.), *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd edn., Oxford, 1996), 716–17; Andreas Mehl, *Roman Historiography* (German edn, 2001; Oxford, 2008); and the corresponding chapters in Michael von Albrecht, *A History of Roman Literature: From Livius Andronicus to Boethius*, vol. 1, rev. Gareth L. Schmeling, trans. Francis and Kevin Newman; vol. 2, trans. R. R. Caston and F. R. Schwartz (Leiden, 1997). Important essay collections include T. P. Wiseman, *Historiography and Imagination: Eight Essays on Roman Culture* (Exeter, 1994); id., *Roman Drama and Roman History* (Exeter, 1998); Ulrich Eigler *et al.* (eds.), *Formen römischer Geschichtsschreibung von den Anfängen bis Livius: Gattungen—Autoren—Kontexte* (Darmstadt, 2003); David Braund and Christopher Gill (eds.), *Myth, History and Culture in Republican Rome: Studies in Honour of T. P. Wiseman* (Exeter, 2003); D. Timpe, *Römische Geschichtsschreibung: Studien zur Historiographie*, ed. Uwe Walter (Darmstadt, 2007). For Roman historiography before Sallust, see Hans Beck, 'The Early Roman Tradition', in John Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (Oxford, 2007), 259–65; *FRH* i. 17–53; *Die Frühen Römischen Historiker*, vol. 2: *Von Coelius Antipater bis Pomponius Atticus*, ed. and trans. Hans Beck and Uwe Walter (Darmstadt, 2004) (hereafter cited as *FRH* ii.), 17–33; and also the entries in *Brill's New Pauly*. For the Late Republic, see Elizabeth Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (London, 1985), 215–32; and D. S. Levene, 'Roman Historiography in the Late Republic', in Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 275–89.

wrote in the Greek language. Rome's external actions were described as justified and in the end always successful; accounts of internal affairs focused on acts of the governing nobility and the people within the framework of a religious and political order.[2] The authors backed up their works with their social prestige and standing (*auctoritas*).

Quintus Ennius came to Rome as a foreigner and soon became well known for his diverse literary production. He wrote an epic in eighteen books known as the *Annales*, of which about 600 of approximately 12,000 hexameters have been preserved.[3] Thanks to his choice to write in Latin instead of Greek, and many catchy phrases, which students learned by heart at school until Cicero's time (first century BC), the *Annales* were for a long time the most widely distributed Roman work with an historical content. Through composition and language, Ennius shaped the history of Rome as an ordered, as well as a continuous, succession of achievements by the Roman people and its leaders.

Possibly as a reaction to Ennius, the famous Marcus Porcius Cato Censorius wrote the *Origines* [Origins] in Latin when he was already quite old.[4] The work, which also survives only in fragments, demonstrated a peculiar mixture of erudition, Roman-Italian patriotism, and the aggressive self-promotion of its author, with Cato inserting his own speeches into accounts of contemporary events. In general, Cato seems to have considered his forefathers' (*maiores*) fame collectively and to have credited it to the Roman people, while the prominent noble families and their 'great names' took a back seat. The seven volumes of *Origines* were later praised on account of their author and their peculiar style, for instance, by Sallust. But their historiographical concept did not set a precedent.

In the historical work of Lucius Calpurnius Piso Frugi,[5] one finds for the first time an account structured according to individual years—the so-called annalistic scheme. The historian projected political conflicts of the present back to the early past, while attesting to a moral decline in his own time. Sayings and exemplary deeds were supposed to serve as a set of rules for correct behaviour.

By the end of the second century BC there was a new burst of activity. Besides the description of the whole of Roman history, new genres emerged, with an historiography that was intellectually more demanding, linguistically and stylistically more sophisticated, and politically more engaged.[6] Now, historical works

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[2] See Hans Beck, '"Den Ruhm nicht teilen wollen": Fabius Pictor und die Anfänge des römischen Nobilitätsdiskurses', in Eigler *et al.* (eds.), *Formen römischer Geschichtsschreibung von den Anfängen bis Livius*, 73–92.

[3] Fragments: *Remains of Old Latin*, vol. 1: *Ennius and Caecilius*, ed. and trans. E. H. Warmington (rev. edn, Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 2–215; and see Walter, *Memoria und res publica*, 258–79 with further bibliography.

[4] *FRH* i. 148–224; and Walter, *Memoria und res publica*, 279–296.

[5] *FRH* i. 282–329; Gary Forsythe, *The Historian L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi and the Roman Annalistic Tradition* (Lanham, Md., 1994); and Walter, *Memoria und res publica*, 306–18.

[6] All works listed in this paragraph survive only in fragments. For a discussion see, for example, Uwe Walter, 'Opfer ihrer Ungleichzeitigkeit: Die Gesamtgeschichten im ersten Jahrhundert v. Chr. und die fortdauernde Attraktivität des "annalistischen Schemas"', in Eigler *et al.* (eds.), *Formen römischer Geschichtsschreibung von den Anfängen bis Livius*, 135–56.

were also written by authors who were not members of the sociopolitical elite. They had to present their claim to authenticity and authority via their text (see below). In about 120 BC, Coelius Antipater wrote an historical monograph in seven volumes about the Hannibalic War, already an frequently treated subject. He relied on exacting investigation and made use of sources of different origin;[7] moreover, sophisticated language and dramatic description made his portrayal convincing. Sempronius Asellio adopted Polybius' claim not only to relate the mere occurrence of events, but to penetrate down to the motives and plans of the actors.[8] Quintus Claudius Quadrigarius (first century BC)[9] chose to begin his history of Rome only with the Gallic invasion (around 390 BC) and thereby demonstrated scepticism about the possibility of accurate knowledge of the early period. Gaius Licinius Macer,[10] however, a politician from the 'left', turned to just this early period and claimed to be able to draw a distinctively political picture of the Conflicts of the Orders (*c.*500–287 BC) with the aid of exact research and newly available sources. On the other hand, the ideologically rather 'right-wing' Lucius Cornelius Sisenna took on a hotly controversial political topic: the recent Social War and Sullan period (91–79 BC), of which he gave a linguistically extravagant and colourful portrayal.[11] Finally, Valerius Antias, a man without any political ambitions, wrote an extensive history of Rome in possibly seventy-five volumes.[12] Such an expansion was only possible because Antias filled gaps in the historical tradition with generic accounts of standard actions—battles, speeches, hearings in the senate—and with documents, statistics, and titillating scenes such as Scipio Africanus' dalliance with a pretty Spanish woman.[13]

The continuously worsening political conflicts and the deep splits within the political class favoured the development of a new subgenre: several *nobiles* wrote autobiographies to justify their careers and their political deeds, and to cast themselves in a positive light. The most extensive work of this kind, sadly also lost, was produced by Lucius Cornelius Sulla after his dictatorship.[14] Another path was chosen by Gaius Iulius Caesar, who described his carefully crafted (and wholly preserved) portrayals of his conquest of Gaul (seven books) and the subsequent civil wars (three books, incomplete) as mere records of accounts (*commentarii*) for the senate and people of Rome, and as raw material for future history-writers— something these works never in fact became, and were never meant to be.[15]

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[7] *FRH* ii. author 11 fr. 11 and 36.   [8] *FRH* ii. author 12 fr. 1–2.
[9] *FRH* ii. 109–67.   [10] *FRH* ii. 316–45.   [11] *FRH* ii. 214–313.
[12] *FRH* ii. 168–240.   [13] *FRH* ii. author 15 fr. 26.
[14] Andrew M. Riggsby, 'Memoir and Autobiography in Rome', in Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 266–74. On Sulla, see P. Scholz, 'Sullas *commentarii*—eine literarische Rechtfertigung', in Eigler *et al.* (eds.), *Formen römischer Geschichtsschreibung von den Anfängen bis Livius*, 172–95.
[15] Kathryn Welch and Anton Powell (eds.), *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter: The War Commentaries as Political Instruments* (London, 1998); Andrew M. Riggsby, *Caesar in Gaul and Rome: War in Words* (Austin, 2006). On the '*commentarii*' as full-fledged historical works rather than mere sketches, see Cicero, *Brutus* 262; and Aulus Hirtius, [Caes.] *Bellum Gallicum* 8, preface.

In a sense, Gaius Sallustius Crispus brought together the advances made by Roman historiography in the three generations before him.[16] Two monographs have been handed down, on the Catilinarian Conspiracy (63–62 BC) and Rome's war with the Numidian prince Jugurtha (112–105 BC). An extensive contemporary history of the period from Sulla's death until at least 67 BC survives only in fragments. Sallust, who had once been active as a loyal adherent of Caesar, was a very political author, and thus judged harshly—not, however, out of mere party loyalty, but with righteous indignation against the failure of the political caste and the decay of political culture. Reading these stylistically highly sophisticated and peculiar monographs demands the utmost attention.[17] Sallust underlined his intellectual claim by contemplating human nature and the difficulties of the historiographer as well as the origin and causes of the crisis in Rome. He named the destruction of Carthage in 146 BC and Sulla's dictatorship (82–79 BC) as decisive breaks with the past. Like his contemporary Cicero, but more complex in his thought, Sallust saw a close relation between the crisis in society and state and the loss or distortion of historical memory (*memoria*). He thus considered that his task as an historian was to re-establish a good relationship between *res Romanae* and *memoria rerum gestarum*: 'the recording of past events is of pre-eminent utility'.[18]

Titus Livius (= Livy) from Patavium (Padua) drew another conclusion from the political turmoils. About the time Sallust died, Livy began to write an extensive history of Rome with the title *Ab urbe condita* [Since the Founding of the City], which, in 142 book rolls, he brought down to the year 9 BC.[19] He too did not have a rosy view of Rome's overall development, but thought that an absorption in Rome's great past might mobilize healing powers:

As for me, I ask that each person pay close attention for himself to the following, namely what was the way of life and the traditions, through which men and by what abilities, both civic and military, the empire was created and increased; next, let him mentally trace those traditions as first they slipped, together with the gradual decline of their proper inculcation, then collapsed more and more, and then began to tumble headlong, until we have to come to our current straits, where we can endure neither our ruination nor its cure. For in the study of history it is especially improving and beneficial to contemplate examples of every kind of behaviour, which are set out on a clear

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[16] Cf. in general, Ronald Syme, *Sallust* (1964; Berkeley, 2002); Kraus and Woodman, *Latin Historians*, 10–50; and Mehl, *Roman Historiography*, ch. 4.5.1.

[17] See Syme, *Sallust*, 240–73 on 'History and Style'.

[18] *Bellum Iugurthinum* 4.1, trans. J. S. Watson. Cf. Jonas Grethlein, '*Nam Quid Ea Memorem*: The Dialectical Relation of *Res Gestae* and *Memoria Rerum Gestarum* in Sallust's *Bellum Iugurthinum*', *Classical Quarterly*, 56 (2006), 135–48. Cicero: *De re publica* 5.2; *Academici Libri* 1.9; and cf. Walter, *Memoria und res publica*, 176.

[19] Just under one quarter of these have been preserved (1–10; 21–45); editions, commentaries translations, and studies are listed by Kraus and Woodman, *Latin Historians*, 120–1; also see Andrew Feldherr, *Spectacle and Society in Livy's History* (Berkeley, 1998); S. P. Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy, Books VI–X*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1997–2005); and Mehl, *Roman Historiography*, ch. 5.1.

monument. From it you can extract for yourself and your commonwealth both what is worthy of imitation and what you should avoid because it is rotten from start to finish.[20]

Livy's work was easily readable and pervaded by a patriotic spirit. The internal conflicts of the past, between nobility and people, as well as between individual aristocrats, were thoroughly reported, but they were at the same time politically neutralized and became part of the past that a new citizenry was self-consciously 'remembering'; a past which bound them to a shared future and therefore had to be made their own.[21] Thus the work fits into Augustus' great project to make the Romans newly aware of their traditions, values, and norms. *Ab urbe condita* could not be monarchist propaganda for the simple reason that it portrayed not only Rome's successes, but also the varied political life of the *res publica* nourished by civic freedom (*libertas*). Livy also avoided simplistic black and white portrayals of his subjects and protagonists. Such ambivalence derives precisely from the moral view of Rome's history, which he shared with Sallust: just as the *res publica* suffered from its outsized success, great individuals developed, due to their virtue (*virtus*), corresponding defects such as megalomania and arrogance. Livy's description of the fall of saviour figures, such as Manlius Capitolinus and Scipio Africanus, and Marius' final collapse in Sallust's work are, in this sense, in line with each other.[22]

Ab urbe condita could not have been continued into the future in the distinctive way fashioned by Livy. The work effectively attained interpretive dominance, replacing all earlier comprehensive histories. But as a literary fixing of the republican tradition it soon proved too long for most of its readers. Thus summaries (*Periochae*) were made, and the work served other authors as material for abbreviated versions (see below).

EXTERNAL IMPULSES: CONTEMPORARY EXPERIENCES AND ORIENTATION REQUIREMENTS

The pioneering works of Greek historiography owe their existence without exception to great events which radically challenged their contemporaries' certainties and orientations. These experiences required interpretation as much as commemoration, and the authors also claimed to provide instruction on the basis of events. Herodotus offered this with regard to the Persian War and

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[20] Livy, preface 9–10, trans. J. D. Chaplin.
[21] Cf. Andrew Feldherr, 'Livy's Revolution: Civic Identity and the Creation of the *Res Publica*', in Thomas Habinek and Alessandro Schiesaro (eds.), *The Roman Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, 1997), 136–57.
[22] Cf. Levene, 'Roman Historiography in the Late Republic', 285–6. Manlius Capitolinus: Livy, books 5 and 6; Scipio Africanus: see the 'obituary' Livy 38.53.10; and Marius: Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum* esp. 63, 6.

the subsequent rise of Athens; Thucydides with regard to the Peloponnesian War, the 'greatest movement yet known in history, not only of the Hellenes, but of a large part of the barbarian world—I had almost said of mankind';[23] and Polybius with his attempt to understand the miracle, 'by what means and under what system of polity the Romans in less than fifty-three years have succeeded in subjecting nearly the whole inhabited world to their sole government'.[24]

The Roman authors also frequently received their impetus from dramatic and critical events. But contrary to Herodotus, Thucydides, or Polybius, who as 'universal' historians expanded their perspective beyond the horizon of a single polis, the Roman historians did not see the world as a complex system with different actors, aims, and value structures. Their viewpoint remained particular. As a rule, they defended Rome's policy against others as justified and necessary. In treatments of internal politics, harsh criticism was often passed on individuals, as was the case with Cato, or on a selfish elite, as was the case with Sallust. But all polemics ultimately aimed towards demonstrating that proper conduct in accordance with tradition (*mos maiorum*) and the virtues (*virtutes*), which until then had always served Rome well, had at least been cultivated once, and should be cultivated again. What this consensus should look like and how to define the *mos maiorum* were of course the subjects of fierce debate, carried out not only within the senate with appeals to the *maiores*,[25] but also in historical works.

Fabius Pictor wrote his history of Rome during the Hannibalic War, and apparently it was his aim to represent Rome as a highly respectable member of the community of nations, a polity with an impressive foundation history and incontrovertible successes ever since, with a strong network of alliances and a sound leadership which was prepared and able to fight the justified war against Carthage. Cato manifestly saw Roman culture as threatened in the decade after the Hannibalic War: in the treatment of allies and provincial subjects and within the political elite he perceived the effects of arrogance, ignorance, and the misrepresentation of the past, against which he deployed the achievements, the pride, and the judgement of the *populus Romanus* and all of Italy. Calpurnius Piso seems to have been so powerfully affected by the 'Gracchan Revolution' after 133 BC that he did not restrict himself to haranguing and criticizing moral decadence,[26] but actually justified the politically motivated murder of one insurgent.[27] Autobiography as a Roman genre began in the age of Marius and Sulla,

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[23] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 1.2, trans. R. Crawley.
[24] Polybius, 1.1, trans. W. R. Paton.
[25] Three distinctive examples: Cato's speech on Rhodes (*FRH* i. author 3 fr. 5.3); the debate on a new style of Roman foreign policy (Livy 42.47); Caesar's speech against the execution of the Catilinarians (Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 51).
[26] *FRH* i. author 7 fr. 10, 27, 30, 36, 41–3.   [27] *FRH* i. author 7 fr. 26.

and the prominent example of Publius Rutilius Rufus[28] at least demonstrates clearly that the emergence of this kind of self-standing text also resulted from the decay of political rules and the fragmentation of the Roman nobility since the age of the Gracchi. The radical intensification of the fight for positions, prestige, and provinces included the annihilation of opponents via trials and banishment. The defeated might only have one resource: to restore his reputation with a work *De vita sua* [On his Own Life].

Sallust had experienced at close range the crisis of the political order, the civil war, and Caesar's autocracy. After the latter's assassination (44 BC), the historian withdrew from active politics. He wrote in a hopeless time of renewed civil war, as property was dispossessed and the political life in Rome was virtually suspended. But however circumstances were subverted by political ambition, hunger for power and property, and by the division of the *res publica*, in Sallust's eyes man himself remained an inexhaustible source of power and could, if correctly guided, use this power to take control of affairs and to gain immortal fame.[29] Finally, Livy benefited from being almost a generation younger than Sallust. Moreover, he had watched the decay of state order from the outside rather than the inside. Shortly after he began to write, the great fights had been fought, and the victorious military potentate Octavian ostentatiously proclaimed an end to the state of emergency. The reign of this man, who from 27 BC onwards carried the name of Augustus, lasted more than forty years and provided the context in which Livy produced an average of three books of *Ab urbe condita* per year. All the same, the historian from Patavium picked out Rome's exalted early period as his own personal favourite, while his readers preferred to hasten towards the present (Livy, preface 4–5). One can also read this confession as the author's soft-spoken claim to autonomy. Additionally, the early parts of this work—which are indeed the ones that have survived—were produced in the period before approximately 19 BC, when the rule of Augustus was not yet fully

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[28] *L'annalistique romaine*, vol. 3: *L'annalistique récente: L'autobiographie politique*, ed. and trans. M. Chassignet (Paris, 2004), XCIV–XCVI, 164–9.

[29] Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum* 1, trans. J. S. Watson: 'Men unreasonably complain of their nature, that, being weak and short-lived, it is governed by chance rather than intellectual power (*virtus*); for, on the contrary, you will find, upon reflection, that there is nothing more noble or excellent, and that to nature is wanting rather human industry than ability or time. The ruler and director of the life of man is the mind (*animus*), which, when it pursues glory in the path of true merit, is sufficiently powerful, efficient, and worthy of honour, and needs no assistance from fortune, who can neither bestow integrity, industry, or other good qualities, nor can take them away. But if the mind, ensnared by corrupt passions, abandons itself to indolence and sensuality, when it has indulged for a season in pernicious gratifications, and when bodily strength, time, and mental vigour, have been wasted in sloth, the infirmity of nature is accused, and those who are themselves in fault impute their delinquency to circumstances. If man, however, had as much regard for worthy objects, as he has spirit in the pursuit of what is useless, unprofitable, and even perilous, he would not be governed by circumstances more than he would govern them, and would attain to a point of greatness, at which, instead of being mortal, he would be immortalized by glory.'

consolidated, and a return to the chaos of civil war and dissension might not
have appeared impossible.

GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY AS MODEL AND CRITERION

Before Fabius Pictor, Greek authors had already written on the early Roman
period.[30] More recent events in Roman history also found sporadic echoes: Aris-
totle mentions the Gallic invasion (Frg. 610 Rose = Plut. Camillus 22.4); Duris
of Samos possibly reports Decius Mus' ritual self-sacrifice in a battle against the
Samnites (*FGrH* 76 F 56b Jacoby). It is thus not surprising that Fabius Pictor
follows the model of 'Foundation History' (*ktisis*) for representing Rome's earliest
history, nor that he relied on a pre-existing Greek schema for its content as
well.[31]

In addition, Greek models provided a concrete supply of information and
narrative patterns, which were taken up in Rome. This was true for mythical
motives, such as the abandonment, rescue, and return of the royal child, which
was applied to Romulus and Remus. The questions about the invention of the
Greek alphabet or the date of the foundation of Rome had also long been dealt
with by learned Greek authors, and worldly wisdom about old age such as that
of the elderly Coriolanus came from Sophocles to Rome.[32] Even more complex
ideas, such as Thucydides' distinction between external causes and the more
fundamental origins of political events, found an echo.[33] Motives and incidents
surrounding the fall of Tarquinius Superbus in Rome bear striking similarities
to those held responsible for the fall of the tyrants in Athens.[34]

The Greek models thus offered a broad spectrum of bodies of knowledge,
motives, and thought patterns. But this also was a burden. For if Romans were
to provide an authoritative account of their politics, past and present, they had
to accept the challenge of being measured against the Greek heavyweights.
When Roman historians entered the competition against their Greek colleagues,
they had also to set their own priorities and open up alternative points of view.
Cato clearly realized this.[35] The early Roman historians were thus confronted

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[30] For a short survey, see T. P. Wiseman, 'The Prehistory of Roman Historiography', in Marin-
cola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 68–70. In this context western Greek
historical writing is especially important; see D. Timpe, *Römische Geschichtsschreibung: Studien
zur Historiographie*, ed. Uwe Walter (Darmstadt, 2007), 9–63.

[31] According to Polybius 10.21.3 such works portrayed 'circumstantially the foundations of
cities, telling us when, how, and by whom they were founded, and detailing the precise conditions
and the difficulties of the undertaking' (trans. W. R. Paton). For Fabius Pictor and his Greek
models see *FRH* i. 89.

[32] Fabius Pictor, *FRH* i. author 1 fr. 21.   [33] Fabius Pictor *FRH* i. author 1, fr. 31.

[34] Cf. Fabius Pictor, *FRH* i. author 1 fr. 17 and 20 with commentary.

[35] See *FRH* i. author 3 fr. 1.2, 4.7.

with a double task, one posed to each writer: they had to constitute their subject matter theoretically and then present it conclusively and, above all, plausibly. Their learned Greek models encouraged dramatic narrative passages and demanded an approach to the subject matter that was 'scholarly'; that is, either founded on erudition or at least proclaiming to be so.

Obvious logical breaks and inconsistencies had to be avoided at all costs. This applied especially to chronology: Ennius might well have claimed that Ilia, mother of the twins Romulus and Remus, was a daughter of Aeneas—poetic freedom allowed for such compression of material. But as historians, Fabius Pictor and Calpurnius Piso could not proceed in this way, given that Timaeus and others had calculated that four centuries lay between Aeneas' arrival in Italy and the birth of the royal children.[36] Calculating the date of Rome's foundation thus became an acid test for academic reliability, just as chronology as a whole became the most important instrument of historiography. In a wider sense, this held true for any kind of numerical data. Since Herodotus, nothing had been more suited to underline the 'scholarly' content and the value of a work than exact information which was based on personal experience, research, or authentic testimony. The precise designation of the size of armies, census figures, and spoils became the object and defining characteristic of the historian's work. Of course, the central problem of Roman historiography was thereby established as well: the scholarly 'arms race' for pseudo-preciseness and detailed knowledge, even of early history.

For the further narratives reached back, the more difficult it became to confirm statements and to suggest reliability.[37] Authentic documents from the early period were almost non-existent.[38] And even when they did exist, they often remained unused. There is no clear evidence that any Roman historian ever consulted the Twelve Tables (*c*.450 BC) to obtain a correct picture of peasant lifestyle in early Rome, and Polybius seems to have been the first historian to examine the treaties between Rome and Carthage, which were kept in the senate's archive (Polybius 3.22–26). Etymologies and etiologies offered a resource by illuminating the origin of significant phenomena while also bringing light into the darkness of earlier periods. Etymological models had belonged to the learned method of sophists and grammatists since the fifth century. This held

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[36] See *FRH* i. author 1 fr. 1.

[37] Thus Livy, in a classic statement, preface 6–8 (trans. B. O. Foster): 'Such traditions as belong to the time before the city was founded, or rather was presently to be founded, and are rather adorned with poetic legends than based upon trustworthy historical proofs, I purpose neither to affirm nor to refute. It is the privilege of antiquity to mingle divine things with human and so to add dignity to the beginnings of cities;…But to such legends as these, however they shall be regarded and judged, I shall, for my own part, attach no great importance.' Cf. also Livy 6.1.1–3.

[38] See Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy,* i. 34–5; and E. Meyer, 'Die römische Annalistik im Lichte der Urkunden', in H. Temporini (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* I, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1972), 970–86.

true even more for etiologies; that is, for the 'scholarly' search for an *aítion*, the starting point of a religious ceremony or social practice, the meaning of which should be explained from its origins. The character of the wise, sometimes cunning, legislator, such as King Numa, also originates in Greece.

Here, the influence of Greek authors on Roman historians becomes directly evident: the etiological method would have been familiar to Fabius Pictor and his successors, just as the principles of Greek chronology were, as the dating of significant events according to Olympian years reveals.[39] In the second century BC learned questions and themes seem to have played an important part in the works of Cassius Hemina[40] and Calpurnius Piso. Later they gave rise to Antiquarianism as an independent literary genre.[41] This culminated with Marcus Terentius Varro. However, the historians by now only infrequently inserted antiquarian excurses (for example, Livy 7.2 about the origins of theatre in Rome).

This leads to an important consequence: since the influence of the substantially and theoretically comprehensive Greek historiography was strong from the beginning, the works of Roman authors could not set out to be meagre collections of data or chronicles. It also explains the great number of works which retell the same history again and again: there was room for experiments, personal emphases, competition with predecessors, variant versions, and literary 'upgrades'. Roman historiography was thus from the beginning a lively and dynamic undertaking.[42]

Towards the end of the second century BC, Roman historiography became more modern and distinctive. The model of Polybius probably played a role here: his work was certainly well known in Rome. According to his model of 'pragmatic historiography', geographical and topographical information, which also reveals a military outlook, formed part of the new style and standard for more extensive monographic or contemporary historical works.[43] Polybius was possibly referred to explicitly by Sempronius Asellio (see above). But this created a problem: the demand to 'look behind the scenes', to disclose causal chains, motivations, and deeper interrelations, could be fulfilled if need be for contemporary history, where it was possible to question eyewitnesses and to consult authentic documents. But to apply this criterion to a more distant past as well must have frequently led to the unrestrained application of creativity in adding details.

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[39] Fabius Pictor, *FRH* i. author I fr. 8. For more records, see *FRH* i. 26 n. 16.S.

[40] *FRH* i. 242–81.

[41] Cf. Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic*, 233–49; and M. Sehlmeyer, 'Die Anfänge der antiquarischen Literatur in Rom', in Eigler *et al.* (eds.), *Formen römischer Geschichtsschreibung von den Anfängen bis Livius*, 157–71.

[42] Cf. Beck, 'The Early Roman Tradition', 263: 'The origins of Roman historiography were determined by a variety of intellectual approaches, narrative patterns, and authorial intentions. Given that diversity, it is easy to understand why recent scholarship tends to reject *passe-partout* concepts that elucidate early history writing at Rome.'

[43] Cf. for example Coelius Antipater, *FRH* ii. author II fr. 13, 35; Cornelius Sisenna, *FRH* ii. author 16 fr. 53, 78, 84; and Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum* 17–19.

Several factors accounted for this filling out of the epoch before the threshold of contemporary history, and thus to the increased size of historical works in contrast to the shorter writings from Fabius Pictor to Calpurnius Piso—a process fittingly described as 'expansion of the past'.[44] Antiquarian erudition could also offer curious and interesting matter to a public outside of the inner circles of Rome's political elite. Structuring the narrative according to individual years (see below), standard for the comprehensive history *Ab urbe condita* since Calpurnius Piso, suggested a certain quantitative regularity and narrative uniformity for the information. In this respect, the works of Fabius Pictor and Cato were more heterogeneous. This 'expansion' can be found particularly in Valerius Antias (see above).

From the closing years of the second century BC, the authors also faced a more sophisticated readership. Thus, additional efforts were made to improve the narrative itself and make it more plausible according to the rules of rhetoric, and with the techniques rhetoric provided. This was possible because the highly developed historiography of the Greeks offered models in a literary and stylistic sense as well. Thucydides was the first to describe a single war as a great drama, and Coelius Antipater followed him in this respect.[45] In the Late Republic, it seems to have become quite fashionable to invoke Thucydides. However, this seems to have almost exclusively involved qualities and idiosyncrasies in style and representation: choice and arrangement of words, the manner of describing events, interpretative patterns, speeches, excursions, and so on.[46] Only in this sense, for instance, can Sallust be seen as an imitator of Thucydides.[47]

At this point, a fundamental difference between Greeks and Romans is to be observed. In Greece, Thucydides had shown the way at least for 'great' historiography to become an independent discourse among intellectuals. The criteria for high quality and truth content could be fixed accordingly: thorough research, scepticism towards 'just any' reports, and methodological meticulousness. Polybius also claimed this for himself, and castigated competitors who were less discriminating. In Rome, however, Fabius Pictor and the subsequent representatives of 'senatorial historiography' derived the authority of their representation

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[44] E. Badian, 'The Early Historians', in T. A. Dorey (ed.), *Latin Historians* (London, 1966), 11; and Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy*, i. 72–85.

[45] See, in general, Tim Rood, 'The Development of the War Monograph', in Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 147–58.

[46] See the apt comment of Pelling, 'Historiography, Roman', 716: 'Still, Roman writers doubtless underestimated the sheer difficulty of discovering distant truth. Cicero (*De or.* 2. 62–3) insists on truthfulness as the first law of history, but gives most emphasis and thought to the rhetorical "superstructure" (*exaedificatio*) built on this acknowledged "foundation" (*fundamentum*); when Pliny, *Ep.* 5. 8, contemplated writing ancient history, he considered it "easy to find out about, but burdensome to bring together". Writers might identify their sources' political bias; they rarely asked more searching questions about the texture and origin of their material.'

[47] See Kraus and Woodman, *Latin Historians*, 12–13; and T. F. Scanlon, *The Influence of Thucydides on Sallust* (Heidelberg, 1980). The interpretative patterns also include assumptions about the character of human nature and how it advances history.

from their social status. Simply put, truth was here more a question of the author's prestige than of the thoroughness and method of his research. From this perspective a truthful account depended mainly on the personal sincerity and impartiality of the author. Tacitus gave expression to this idea in his famous phrase '*sine ira et studio*' (*Annales* 1.1.3)—a claim to write without being influenced by motives of favouritism or revenge.[48] It is in this sense that Cicero defined truth (*veritas*) for historiography, in opposition to personal favour and sympathy (*gratia, amor*). And in Sallust's eyes, moral defects and political partiality made good historical writing impossible. What counted, therefore, was *the effort* to be truthful:

Returning to those studies from which, at their commencement, a corrupt ambition had allured me, I determined to write, in detached portions (*carptim*), the transactions of the Roman people, as any occurrence should seem worthy of mention; an undertaking to which I was the rather inclined, as my mind was uninfluenced by hope, fear, or political partisanship (*a spe metu partibus rei publicae*). I shall accordingly give a brief account, with as much truth as I can (*quam verissume potero*), of the Conspiracy of Catiline.[49]

LIFE WITH THE ANCESTORS: ROMAN CULTURE OF THE PAST

The historical culture of the *populus Romanus* represents the third essential factor for the development and character of Roman historical writing. This is a broad field which cannot be surveyed in its entirety here.[50]

For the Romans of the Republic, the past was alive and present in many ways. Their identity, that which allowed them to say 'we', was strongly defined by memory (*memoria*). This *memoria* was not 'collective' in the sense of a content of consciousness shared by all individuals; this cannot exist and would also be impossible to prove empirically. But in Rome there was a socially communicated memory, meaning a sufficiently dense communication and representation of knowledge and norms which joined past events, persons, and actions. This memory is not to be confused with a coherent picture of the entire progress of Roman history, as it is depicted by works of history. But nor were the names, locations, monuments, and stories in the mind of each individual Roman unrelated.

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[48] For more details, see A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (London, 1988), 73–4.

[49] Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 4.2–3, trans. J. S. Watson.

[50] For more details, see Walter, *Memoria und res publica*, 11–195. For a compact survey, see Karl-J. Hölkeskamp, 'History and Collective Memory in the Middle Republic', in Nathan Rosenstein and Robert Morstein-Marx (eds.), *A Companion to the Roman Republic* (Malden/Oxford, 2006), 478–95. For a case study, see Harriet I. Flower, 'Memories of Marcellus: History and Memory in Roman Republican Culture', in Eigler *et al.* (eds.), *Formen römischer Geschichtsschreibung von den Anfängen bis Livius*, 39–52.

They were, on the contrary, connected, mostly of course not chronologically nor through a nexus of causes and intersecting actions, such as taken together make up the term 'history' and are represented within historiography. Rather, there were associations—a cognitive, conceptual, and emotional organon—which could be invoked via pictures, objects, names, and distinctive words.

At the same time, this social memory corresponded with basic social circumstances. In Rome, the head of the house, the *paterfamilias*, stood for the authority of tradition. To emulate the elder (*maior natu*), to obey him and to grow into the role of the father was a norm hardly ever questioned.[51] In addition, and in contrast to modernity, experiences, certainties, and competences in Rome were not devalued by accelerated change, but can rather be imagined as infinitely valid. 'Live after my fashion, and according to the ancient manners (*moribus antiquis*); what I am prescribing to you, the same do you remember and practise.' This phrase from a comedy by Plautus illustrates the power of tradition in everyday education.[52]

A young Roman had his first initiation at home, where he listened to the adults' stories, and at school, where he learned by heart the powerful verses of Ennius (see above). Objects such as decorations and booty were preserved, and frequently offered the opportunity to envision the cause of their acquisition. In the houses of prominent aristocrats, who had high office holders among their ancestors, these ancestors were very palpably present.[53] Their lifelike images (*imagines*) made of wax were kept in wooden shrines in the atrium—the great room in the front part of the house, where guests and clients were received. Sometimes, several shrines were linked with painted lines like a family tree. Like later noble societies, the Roman nobility organized their knowledge of the past genealogically, as a family's *memoria*.[54] On certain holidays the shrines were opened, and if a family member who held high office died, these partly soot-blackened, and hence manifestly old, images were carried in a funeral procession (*pompa funebris*) by people resembling the various ancestors. The son or another young relative then mounted the speaker's platform in the Forum and delivered the eulogy on the deceased (*laudatio funebris*). Meanwhile, as Polybius reports, the bearers of the images sat in a row, each in the dress of the highest office the respective ancestor had held.

[51] On this, see P. Scholz, *Den Vätern folgen: Sozialisation und Erziehung in der späten römischen Republik* (Berlin, forthcoming (2011)).

[52] *Trinummus* 297–8, trans. H. T. Riley. About the same time, Ennius wrote the famous verse *moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque* ('On manners and on men of good old time stands firm the Roman state'), *Annales*, v. 500 Vahlen, trans. E. H. Warmington.

[53] See Harriet I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford, 1996).

[54] On this, see W. Blösel, 'Die *memoria* der *gentes* als Rückgrat der kollektiven Erinnerung im republikanischen Rom', in Eigler *et al.* (eds.), *Formen römischer Geschichtsschreibung von den Anfängen bis Livius*, 53–72.

It is not easy for an ambitious and high minded young man to see a finer spectacle than this. For who would not be won over at the sight of all the masks together of those men who had been extolled for virtue as if they were alive and breathing? What spectacle could appear nobler than this? None except the man who is speaking over the one who is about to be buried, who, when he has finished the eulogy about him, begins praising the others present starting with the oldest one, and recounts the successes and deeds of each. As a consequence of this, since the reputation for virtue of good men is always being made new, the renown of those who did some noble deed is immortal and the glory of those who rendered service to their country becomes well-known to the many and an inheritance for those who come after. But the greatest result is that the young men are encouraged to undergo anything for the sake of the common cause in the hope of gaining the good reputation which follows upon the brave deeds of men.[55]

Clearly at each *pompa funebris* it was possible and necessary to speak about the merits of the particular family, to ask about individual *maiores*, to differentiate between people with similar names, and to bring them into relation with events that concerned the community as a whole. Naturally, this was easiest in the case of the recently deceased, since he was the figure nearest in time, and thanks to visual aids like panels and objects that were also carried along as in a triumphal procession. A client of the family, who would have often waited in his patron's atrium before the morning reception and who would have studied the ancestors' family trees together with the short inscriptions (*tituli*) on the shrines for the waxen masks, was additionally familiar with the sequence and could later give precise descriptions for spectators who were less close to the deceased— which did not prevent errors and exaggerations. Hence, the day of such a funeral would have been a moment to speak about history. This communicative reactualization was also assisted by the references to the forefathers in the funeral oration as well, which thus virtually contributed an 'historical commentary' to the spectacle.

The orator could also let the city of Rome itself speak. The funeral procession might have passed the family's house, which was decorated with weapons and other booty from past military campaigns under the command of one of their ancestors. Maybe there was a building to point out, or a temple or hall erected by a family member to fulfil a vow or let the people partake in the fruits of the victory. The speaker might have turned and pointed at the Capitol, where each triumphal procession ended with a sacrifice to the highest Roman God, Juppiter Optimus Maximus, and recalled the victories of famous consuls from his family, who were once rewarded with a triumph. If he belonged to the 'right' family, he would certainly have pointed to images and monuments erected in memory of great victories: the statues in the temple of Honos ('honour') and Virtus ('virtue') honouring three Claudii Marcelli who together held nine consulates; the arches of the Cornelii Scipiones on the Capitol and the Fabii on

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[55] Polybius 6.53.9–54.3, trans. Harriet I. Flower.

Via Sacra in the Roman forum, the images of the patrician Claudian ancestors on shields at the temple of Bellona. *Gentes* which were especially successful over time, such as the Fabii, were able to spin a dense net of cross-referencing memorials over the whole city.

However, the credit that the Roman nobility extracted from their ancestors' achievements had to be established again and again, and not only because the *nobiles* were highly competitive amongst themselves and it might occasionally happen that the balance sheet was a bit manipulated. Livy at any rate bemoaned the historian's difficulties in reporting names and events of past times in a credible manner:

It is not easy to determine between either the facts or the writers, which of them deserves the preference: I am inclined to think that history has been much corrupted by means of funeral panegyrics and false inscriptions on statues; each family striving by false representations to appropriate to itself the fame of warlike exploits and public honours. From this cause, certainly, both the actions of individuals and the public records of events have been confused. Nor is there extant any writer, contemporary with those events, on whose authority we can with certainty rely.[56]

Since the nobility during the Roman Republic, while a highly exclusive club, was no 'closed shop', there had always been 'new men' (*homines novi*) who rose to the consulate without the aid of ancestral portraits, and could therefore be inclined to set their current achievements against the bygone deeds of the nobility and thus devalue the latter's capital.[57]

The funeral procession of distinguished families united two modes of orientation towards the past which were fundamental to its effect: it drew attention to the exemplary accomplishment of the deceased for the *res publica*, but also embedded it into an image of continuous past successes which were able, in turn, to lend a self-sustaining certainty of outcome to the deeds of those acting in the future. In the best case, this allowed them—with the rewards of victory

[56] Livy 8.40.3–5, trans. D. Spillan. Cicero had already complained in a similar way: 'For it was customary in most families of note to preserve their images, their trophies of honour, and their memoirs, either to adorn a funeral when any of the family perished, or to perpetuate the fame of their ancestors, or prove their own nobility. But the truth of History has been much corrupted by these laudatory essays; for many circumstances were recorded in them which never existed; such as false triumphs, a pretended succession of consulships, and false alliances and elevations, when men of inferior rank were confused with a noble family of the same name: as if I myself should pretend that I am descended from M. Tullius, who was a Patrician, and shared the consulship with Servius Sulpicius, about ten years after the expulsion of the kings' (Cicero, *Brutus* 62, trans. E. Jones). See R. T. Ridley, '*Falsi triumphi, plures consulatus*', *Latomus*, 42 (1983), 372–83; and J. H. Richardson, 'Roman Noble Self-presentation as an Influence on the Historiographical Tradition of Early Rome', D.Phil. thesis, Exeter University, 2004.

[57] Cf. H. Strasburger, 'Homo novus', *Pauly-Wissowa: Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 17.1 (Stuttgart, 1936), 1226–7. For a polemic devaluation of the ancestral pride of the well established, see Marius' speech in Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum* 85; and cf. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture*, 17–23 and 155–6.

and representation set before their eyes—to forget all temporary setbacks: the image of the past thus shrank to a foreshortened chain of high points, the 'mountains' of success eclipsing the valleys of failure. And with each *pompa* the sequence became one element longer, and thus at least theoretically the certainty increased that the past might be continued into the future. It is hence no accident that this idea of perceptible continuity could also be applied to the whole *res publica* and pervaded Roman historical writing from its beginnings with Fabius Pictor and Ennius up to the historical theology in Vergil's epic, the *Aeneid* (19 BC).

In historiography, as well, one can see how the ideal of an education based on imitation goes together with a presentation of the genealogical continuity of individual families. Thus, many prominent families seemed to follow specific patterns of behaviour, as can be seen most clearly in the case of the patrician Claudii.[58] A few members of this family, of whom the tradition handed down a reasonably well-defined portrait, lent colour to the characterization of relatives who frequently had the same name, or of ancestors from an earlier age, who were known by name only. The fiction of resemblance offered historical writers a handle to model supporting actors plausibly based on the characters of leading men and ladies.[59]

The genealogical model of tracing a line of ancestors was so strong that it could also serve as the foundation of ideational and political continuity. For apart from the individual noble families who derived their collective claim to a leadership position within the *res publica* from earlier, continually represented achievements, there was also another group nurturing its own memory: the people, particularly those of the city of Rome (*plebs urbana*). Their leaders, the tribunes of the people and the plebeian aediles, also belonged to the nobility, or were on their way into the nobility. But time and again, Rome witnessed social conflicts on account of indebtedness, conscription, and food shortages, which brought forth eloquent and prominent leaders of protest and disobedience. The plebs cultivated the memory of these, and especially of the successes they gained. They had their own office holders and their own place of memory, the Aventine Hill, with several temples and an archive of their own for resolutions of the people and the senate.[60] All this did not lead to an enduring political mobilization. But after Tiberius' and Gaius Gracchus' bloody end (133/122 BC), the popular agitators could name, in their polemics against the ruling nobility and

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[58] Cf. T. P. Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics: Three Studies in Greco-Roman Literature* (Leicaster, 1979), 57–139; and Ann Vasaly, 'Personality and Power: Livy's Depiction of the Appii Claudii in the First Pentad', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 117 (1987), 203–26.

[59] Cf. Uwe Walter, 'Ein Ebenbild des Vaters: Wiederholungen in der historiographischen Traditionsbildung', *Hermes*, 132 (2004), 406–25.

[60] Cf. Walter, *Memoria und res publica*, 183–8; in addition, see Nicholas Horsfall, *The Culture of the Roman Plebs* (London, 2003); T. P. Wiseman, 'Roman history and the ideological vacuum', in id. *Remembering the Roman People* (Oxford, 2009), 5–32; and id., *The Myths of Rome* (Exeter, 2004), 189–203.

the senate, a long line of plebeian tribunes extending down from the Early Republic who stood up for the plebs' interests. Hence the words Sallust puts in the mouth of the rabble-rousing tribune Gaius Memmius (III bc):

Your forefathers (*maiores*), in order to assert their rights and establish their authority (*maiestas*), twice seceded in arms to Mount Aventine; and will not you exert yourselves, to the utmost of your power, in defence of that liberty which you received from them? Will you not display so much the more spirit in the cause, from the reflection that it is a greater disgrace to lose what has been gained, than not to have gained it at all?[61]

In this way the stories and stages of the conflict doubtless became more and more embellished, finally allowing Livy to portray the domestic politics of the Early Republic as a single 'struggle of the orders' continuing for more than 200 years, although it certainly never existed in this form.

Apart from the *memoria* which could be mobilized for the particular interests of individual families or the people as a unity, the memory of the mythic origins of the city was also cultivated. The place where the basket with the abandoned twins Romulus and Remus had been washed ashore was pointed out; so too was the simple hut of the founder of the city on the Palatine, and the Lacus Curtius in the Forum, where an heroic Roman had consecrated himself in a moment of military necessity and plunged with his horse through a crevasse into the under-world. The Capitol with its ancient temple of Juppiter Optimus Maximus, the erection of which had already begun under the monarchy, acquired a particular aura.[62] These memory places received renewed attention under Augustus, and it was only then that the canon of legends, the assignment of places, and the learned explanations that bound them together would have become fixed, enabling the Romans in a new Golden Age to rediscover the great Early period. In this context the term 'cultural revolution' has been justifiably used, and topographies of a mythic-historical landscape have been traced in Propertius' fourth book, in Vergil's *Aeneid*, and in the work of Livy.[63]

In the time before Augustus, Rome's cityscape must have offered sites of memory that were multiple and polyvalent. Since not many people read books or walked through the city with a tourist's alertness, they obtained their images

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[61] Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum* 31.17, trans. J. S. Watson. The plebeian tribune Licinius Macer also argues by means of a 'then–now' contrast in a speech freely composed by Sallust: *Histories* frg. 3.34, trans. P. McGushin.

[62] Cf. most recently, Jennifer A. Rea, *Legendary Rome: Myth, Monuments, and Memory on the Palatine and Capitoline* (London, 2007).

[63] Cf. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, 2008); and Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton, 1996). On Livy, see Kraus and Woodman, *Latin Historians*, 56–8; Mary Jaeger, *Livy's Written Rome* (Ann Arbor, 1997); and Feldherr, *Spectacle and Society in Livy's History.* Due to the integration of former allies into the body of Roman citizens and to immigration to Rome, already in the Late Republic there were many people who were in fact *cives Romani* but did not know the traditions of the *populus Romanus.*

of the past mainly by listening. Their education at home only formed the beginning. During religious celebrations, long hymns were sung, which would have contained accounts of the origins of the cult and stories about the deity. Whether there was also a form of epic poetry performed at feasts in these early times is disputed. But clearly, a mass audience saw historical plays in the theatre which told them of Romulus and Remus, but also of people and events of the more recent past. These plays, which appealed both to ear and heart, would have been ineffaceably etched in the memory (even if the people as a whole apparently preferred to see comedies).[64] And finally, public speeches, at least those of Cicero, were studded with allusions to historical characters and events, largely from the recent past.[65] Mostly these were brief references, often grouped in threes, and nobody knows how many of these allusions an average audience member would have been able to interpret immediately. But the speeches show that there must have been a basis of communication shared between speaker and audience regarding the past and its values.

Without doubt, the Romans, who did not form an homogenous population but differed widely in terms of ancestry, status, education, and interests, also maintained different images of the past. Agreement was possible, nonetheless, because everybody shared a very specific mode of speaking about and under-standing history: the *exemplum*.[66] *Exempla* were short accounts relating the model behaviour of individuals, often in critical situations. The actions were always exemplary in relation to authoritative values and norms, such as reliability (*fides*), courage (*fortitudo*), devotion (*pietas*), or sternness (*severitas*), and frequently, a personal sacrifice had to be made in the service of the *res publica*. However, since these values and norms were materialized exclusively in deeds, they could only be communicated in accounts of the past. They obtained their form and binding force precisely through this very connection of past actions, present calls to action, and actions expected and wished for in the future. Since many *exempla* were regarded as common knowledge, they could be reduced to a code, and the mere mentioning of a name would invoke a person, a story, and a behavioural norm.

For historians, *exempla* were an ideal format, since they could be varied as well as presented in canonical form. They also represented beacons in the course of events, and the author could even mirror his own communication with the

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[64] Due to their very poor transmission, however, it is disputed how significant these 'Fabulae Praetextae' were for the Romans' historical awareness and for the formation of tradition. T. P. Wiseman deems them to be very influential in *Roman Drama and Roman History* (Exeter, 1998) and 'The Prehistory of Roman Historiography'; but cf. Harriet I. Flower, 'Fabulae Praetextae in Context: When Were Plays on Contemporary Subjects Performed at Rome?' *Classical Quarterly*, 45 (1995), 170–90. All surviving fragments are extensively discussed by G. Manuwald, *Fabulae praetextae: Spuren einer literarischen Gattung der Römer* (Munich, 2001).

[65] See the essential F. Bücher, *Verargumentierte Geschichte: Exempla Romana im politischen Diskurs der späten römischen Republik* (Stuttgart, 2006).

[66] See Walter, *Memoria und res publica*, 51–62.

reader by having the actors within his portrayal themselves use *exempla* to fulfil their aims.[67] Thus, soon, pure collections of *exempla* were created which dispensed with the historical context and let only the beacons shine. The first collection of this kind comes from Valerius Maximus. It is fascinating, but does not belong to historical writing in the strict sense.[68]

THE AUDIENCE[69]

The readership of early historical works must have remained quite small at first. Historical drama and Ennius' *Annales* reached a far greater audience. A literary culture with readings, libraries, and a better functioning book trade only emerged in Rome near the end of the Republic. Asinius Pollio, also a distinguished historian himself, founded the first public library in Rome in the thirties BC. Cicero once casually mentioned people without political ambitions, craftsmen, and old people as readers of historical works (*De Finibus* 5.2). From at least this time on, the potential distribution of historical writings should not be underestimated. Above all, they could easily have effects reaching beyond the city of Rome. The new works of Claudius Quadrigarius and Valerius Antias have, perhaps justifiably, been brought into connection with a new, greater reading public; namely the elites of the cities which gained citizenship after the Social War (91–89 BC), who, in the wake of Italy's accelerated Romanization, also wanted or had to study the history of the leading power.[70] In practical terms the text was at an advantage over place, monument, and rite, because it could be received everywhere and at any time, and could thus reach a greater public, even outside of the political and cultural centre. In the early imperial period, we know of a man from Cadiz (Spain) who travelled to Rome just to catch a glimpse of Livy (Pliny, *Epistulae* 2.3.8). By this time a literary culture had formed well beyond Rome, and historical works found a wider educated readership than two or three generations before.

How high the expectations for a historical work could be already in the Late Republic is shown by a letter of Cicero from the year 56 BC asking Lucius Lucceius to praise his salvation of the country in the history he is writing.[71] Leaving motives of vanity aside, Cicero's demand effectively requires the historian to

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[67] Cf. Jane D. Chaplin, *Livy's Exemplary History* (Oxford, 2000).

[68] Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 2000); Clive Skidmore, *Practical Ethics for Roman Gentlemen: The Work of Valerius Maximus* (Exeter, 1996); and W. Martin Bloomer, *Valerius Maximus and the Rhetoric of the New Nobility* (London, 1992).

[69] On the following, see Walter, *Memoria und res publica*, 212–13.

[70] Cf., *FRH* ii. 23–6.

[71] Cicero comments on historical writing on various occasions but never undertook such a work himself. Cf. P. A. Brunt, 'Cicero and Historiography (1980)', in id., *Studies in Greek History and Thought* (Oxford, 1993), 181–209.

bring together in one work causal analysis, moral–political judgement, and an absorbing, vivid, and emotional portrayal:

For from the beginning of the conspiracy to my return from exile it appears to me that a moderate-sized monograph might be composed, in which you will, on the one hand, be able to utilize your special knowledge of civil disturbances, either in unraveling the causes (*in explanandis causis*) of the revolution or in proposing remedies for evils, blaming meanwhile what you think deserves denunciation, and establishing the righteousness of what you approve by explaining the principles on which they rest: and on the other hand, if you think it right to be more outspoken (as you generally do), you will bring out the perfidy, intrigues, and treachery of many people towards me. For my vicissitudes will supply you in your composition with much variety, which has in itself a kind of charm, capable of taking a strong hold on the imagination of readers, when you are the writer. For nothing is better fitted to please (*ad delectationem*) a reader than variety of circumstance and vicissitudes of fortune, which, though the reverse of welcome to us in actual experience, will make very pleasant reading: for the untroubled recollection of a past sorrow has a charm of its own....Truly the mere chronological record of the annals (*ordo ipse annalium*) has very little charm for us—little more than the entries in the *fasti*: but the doubtful and varied fortunes of a man, frequently of eminent character, involve feelings of wonder, suspense, joy, sorrow, hope, fear: if these fortunes are crowned with a glorious death, the imagination is satisfied with the most fascinating delight which reading can give. Therefore it will be more in accordance with my wishes if you come to the resolution to separate from the main body of your narrative, in which you embrace a continuous history of events, what I may call the drama of my actions and fortunes: for it includes varied acts, and shifting scenes both of policy and circumstance.[72]

THE 'ANNALISTIC': THE MODEL OF ROMAN HISTORICAL WRITING?

The criticism of the presentation of history in the form of a chronicle, as expressed by Cicero, is old. We can already read in Cato: 'I do not care to write what is in the table kept by the *pontifex maximus:* how often grain was expensive, how often darkness or something else obstructed the light of the moon or sun.'[73] And Sempronius Asellio characterized what in his opinion was insufficient historiography thus: 'The books of annals merely made known what happened and in what year it happened, which is like writing a diary, which the Greeks call ephēmeris.'[74] Nevertheless, the year-by-year portrayal of events prevailed in the larger works of Roman historiography. This applied to comprehensive history (Livy, *Ab urbe condita*) as much as to contemporary history (Sallust, *Historiae*). Tacitus composed his work according to emperors and thus contributed a biographical

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[72] Cicero, *Epistulae ad Familiares* 5.12.4–6, trans. E. S. Shuckburgh.
[73] Cato, *Origines, FRH* i. author 3 fr. 4.1, trans. M. Roller.
[74] Sempronius Asellio, *FRH* ii. author 12 fr. 1, trans. J. C. Rolfe.

element to historical writing, but formally he also structured his work according to consular years.

Even if the length could vary greatly, certain elements were essential in annalistic representation. At the beginning of each year, the name of the two consuls was given; then came a block of material on war and foreign policy, followed by domestic affairs. The pattern concluded, when necessary, with news about extraordinary omens, epidemics, floods, and other events that pointed to a disruption in good relations with the gods and demanded appropriate expiation. At the very end there were sometimes the death notices of prominent figures; above all, deceased priests and their successors were recorded with great precision.

The genesis of this annalistic scheme is controversial among historians.[75] Cicero and the learned antiquarian Verrius Flaccus record the ancient theory: from time immemorial, the high priest (*pontifex maximus*) had placed each year a board (*tabula*) in front of his office and noted down all important events. These records had then been summarized by the end of the first century BC and published in eighty(!) books. But this evolutionist reconstruction is evidently false.[76] Earlier historical works of Fabius Pictor and Cato did not follow the annalistic scheme, and Cato, who apparently could still see the boards, specifically complained that they were entirely uninteresting for the historical writer. Fabius Pictor probably did not even have a list of consuls at his disposal. The first historical work with the title *Annales* was Ennius' epic, and the annalistic scheme would have emanated from him. Ennius was no senator, nor even a 'proper' Roman, and thus could have no intrinsic claim to speak authoritatively about Roman history. To be able to do so nonetheless, he not only portrayed events with poetic force, but also provided his text with elements which referred to the *tabulae apud pontificem.* He thus imitated the form of 'official' records of Roman priests—however old, authentic, and extensive they might have been.[77] This dependence on the priestly records for the form of his work also supports his representation of events with a claim to personal technical knowledge as well as to impartiality.

As we saw, the annalistic form was absorbed into historical prose writing by Calpurnius Piso, or maybe already had been by Cassius Hemina, who, like Ennius, did not belong to the ruling aristocracy. It is fascinating to consider why this form—despite all criticism—survived the 'modernization' of Roman historiography after about 120 BC (see above). There are four reasons to be named.

[75] Cf. Bruce W. Frier, *Libri Annales Pontificum Maximorum: The Origins of the Annalistic Tradition* (1979; 2nd edn, Ann Arbor, 1999). I consider Frier's theses problematic to some extent.
[76] The following is discussed more extensively in *FRH* i. 19–21 and 37–47; and Walter, *Memoria und res publica*, 2004, 196–204, 261–2, and 345–8.
[77] The relation between these priestly records and the lists of consuls and triumphs (*fasti*) with the almanac (also named *fasti*) cannot be considered here. See Walter 2004, *Memoria und res publica*, 196–204 and Denis Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History* (Berkeley, 2007), esp. ch. 6.

First, the authors of new comprehensive histories, as Ennius had earlier, imitated the priests' *tabulae*, at least ostensibly, to give their works an 'official' authentication. Possibly the very recent 'publication' of the pontifical material in the oft-mentioned *Annales Maximi* of Mucius Scaevola also gave a decisive impulse toward annalistic history. Their very artlessness and mechanical structure underlined a claim to factual validity which could make it seem interesting for authors beyond the political elite to take the next step and finally to turn this authoritative form into prose literature—all the more so as the direction in which this transformation was to take had been established.

Second, this sort of arrangement of the material in itself had implications for the perception of the political and historical process. The annalistic yearly bulletin as such carried a positive message, for it embodied the desired and reassuring continuity and momentum of the *libera res publica.* This happened via a literary articulation of the principle of annual magistracies, which at once symbolized and secured freedom. Livy unequivocally proclaims this connection after the fall of the despotic monarchy of the Tarquins by beginning the second book of *Ab urbe condita* with the sentence: 'The affairs, civil and military, of the Roman people, henceforward free, their annual magistrates, and the sovereignty of the laws, more powerful than that of men, I shall now detail.'[78]

From that time on, however bad a year might be, however inadequate the consuls, however rebellious and obstinate a plebeian tribune—on 31 December (or already on the 10th) it was over: new consuls and tribunes took office, and the horrible year was ticked off. This certainly did not offer much potential for criticism, but that was not the concern of these comprehensive histories anyway. They rather documented the framework of annually repeated acts and regular and schematized procedures for handling unforeseeable events. The textual pattern staged history as a cycle of rituals and thus could offer orientation in the often hopeless time after 90 BC by demonstrating that some things always stayed the same and functioned: the consul's inauguration, sacrifices, the functions of the senate, and the priests' work of establishing peace with the gods.

Third, one of the strengths of the annalistic form was to record scrupulously the world of visible objects, especially distinctive buildings, their erection, destruction, and remodelling, and thus bring audiences and readers constantly into close contact with the sphere of their daily surroundings, because these notices became a self-evident part of the historical continuum. Briefly put, the annalistic scheme provided for the visibility of the past; the text, as it were, became itself a monument.[79] Social and political relations as well were continually reperformed in this kind of historical text, in speeches, but also in accounts

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[78] Livy 2.1.1, trans. D. Spillan.

[79] 'This it is which is particularly salutary and profitable in the study of history, that you behold instances of every variety of conduct displayed on a conspicuous monument' (Livy, preface 10, trans. D. Spillan), See Gary B. Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome* (Ithaca, 1995), 16–19, 55–62.

of trials and funerals. A clear temporal and spatial focus on Rome also emerged. The year began and ended here, nowhere else. This provided a clear organizing perspective on the whole of the world under Roman control and thus rendered the works accessible to wider circles in Rome and Italy, while universal history as a form of historical narrative would have been more challenging intellectually as well as politically.[80]

Fourth, as can be well illustrated in the case of Livy, the structure linked to the consulate year could be handled with extraordinary flexibility, especially if wars were fought in several locations and were interrelated with debates and decisions in Rome.[81] Valerius Antias constructed the trial of the Scipios as a drama spanning several years.[82] In his annalistic contemporary history, Sisenna provided discrete narrations about each individual location to avoid confusing the reader through broken-up reports and frequent changes of place.[83] In the case of a very extensive description, as was the annalists' treatment of the recent past, the 'annalistic' elements naturally receded into the background and were less visible than when forty-two years were treated in a single book, as was done by Livy in his second book.

EPILOGUE: VERY SHORT HISTORIES OF ROME[84]

Under the empire, the readers' interest moved towards the sovereign. The Early period and the Republic remained an essential part of Rome's history, but they did not experience a new interpretation. Livy's *Ab urbe condita* had by now become for many too extensive to be read as a whole; thus anonymous short versions (*Epitomae*) and collections of summaries of the individual books (*Periochae*) were produced.

Other authors wrote brief accounts of Roman history on the basis of existing works, again especially Livy's. Thus at the beginning of the second century AD Lucius Annaeus Florus did not, naturally, follow the annalistic scheme, but organized the material by Rome's wars, foreign and civil, up to the reign of Augustus. The work was mainly written for the educated, non-senatorial upper class of the Latin half of the empire, which wanted to familiarize itself quickly with the essential facts and outlines. Florus used history as a call to present action: he praised the Republic, which had distinguished itself by an unbroken will to rule the world, while his own time resembled a period of senility.

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[80] Such works were written either by non-Romans or outsiders. See Liv Mariah Yarrow, *Historiography at the End of the Republic: Provincial Perspectives on Roman Rule* (Oxford, 2006); and D. Timpe, 'Römische Geschichte und Weltgeschichte', in id., *Römische Geschichtsschreibung*, 109–31.

[81] Cf. J. W. Rich, 'Structuring Roman History: the Consular Year and the Roman Historical Tradition', in *Histos: The New Electronic Journal of Ancient Historiography*, 1 (1997). (http://www.dur.ac.uk/Classics/histos/1997/rich1.html [accessed 30 March 2008]).

[82] *FRH* ii. author 15 fr 46.　　　　[83] *FRH* ii. author 16 fr. 129.

[84] Cf. Mehl, *Roman Historiography*, ch. 6.5.

In the fourth century, those men who had been but little educated at home ascended to the top of the Empire's administration via a military career and now had to acquire the tradition quickly. In general, this was the age of the summary (*Breviarium*).[85] Around AD 370, Eutropius produced the textbook whose success endured far beyond the limits of antiquity, into the eighteenth century. He no longer used Livy directly for the history of the Republic any more but relied on an epitome, in addition to other sources. Eutropius did not follow the annalistic scheme but frequently dated events from the year of Rome's foundation (753 BC), rendered canonical by Varro. The long duration of the Imperium Romanum allowed one to derive the certainty that it would continue to exist.

It should be clear that Roman historical writing up to and including Livy cannot be subsumed under the umbrella term 'annalistic'. The development of the genre was in the main determined by individual authors and their works, while specific demands, conditions, and possibilities certainly played a large role. At its conclusion, in Sallust and Livy it produced authors whose works offered to the Renaissance and the French Revolution archetypes of civic virtue and its decay. Careful study teaches us that Roman historiography cannot be fully understood either as a mere source (always insufficient) for historical facts, or as wholly fictional literature. It constructs its own distinctive greatness.

Translated by Julia Boll

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

218–201 BC	Hannibalic War
*c.*215 BC	Fabius Pictor composes the first Roman history
*c.*170 BC	Quintus Ennius composes the epic *Annales*
*c.*150 BC	Cato's *Origines*
133 BC	Tribunate of Tiberius Gracchus brings violence and civil strife to Rome
91–89 BC	Social War (Rome vs. her Italian allies)
59 BC	Consulate of Caesar
58–51 BC	Gallic War
49–45 BC	Civil War (Caesar vs. Pompeians)
44 BC	Caesar murdered
42–34 BC	Historical writings of Sallust (*Catilina*, *Jugurtha*, *Historiae*)
30 BC	Octavian acquires total control of the Roman Empire
*c.*30 BC	Livy (died *c.* AD 17) begins to compose *Ab urbe Condita*

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[85] Cf. T. M. Banchich, 'The Epitomizing Tradition in Late Antiquity', in Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 305–11; and Markus Sehlmeyer, *Geschichtsbilder für Pagane und Christen. Res Romanae in den spätantiken Breviarien* (Berlin *et al.*, 2009).

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Chapter 12

Imperial History and Biography at Rome

Ellen O'Gorman

Between about 31 and 27 BC, a succession of extraordinary settlements between the Roman senate and the future emperor Augustus created—in effect—a constitutional change from oligarchy to autocracy.[1] Since Ronald Syme's influential history of 1939 this change has been understood as a 'revolution',[2] yet the language of Augustan propaganda emphasized conservatism over innovation, to the extent that Augustus is also popularly supposed to have 'restored the republic'.[3] Analyses of this period are thus caught between 'restoration' and 'revolution', 'continuity' and 'change'. This is particularly the case for historians and biographers of the first century AD,[4] as they were confronted with the politically charged issue of how to represent the new Principate.

The political climate of the early Principate forms an important context for understanding the various forms of historical writing in this period. Yet that political context is largely reconstructed from these very same texts, which offer multiple ways of understanding the nature of the state's transformation—indeed whether it is properly understood as a transformation at all. This is relevant when we see how imperial historiography reflects upon its own generic transformation, as Republican annalistic history,[5] structured around the consular year, gives way to history structured around the reigns of emperors. This also affects how we read ancient biographies of this period; whether we detect a 'turn to biography' and whether we see this too as a symptom, or a conscious declaration of political change. For the first part of this chapter I will consider both biographical and

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[1] E. T. Salmon, 'The Evolution of the Augustan Principate', *Historia*, 5 (1956), 456–78; Sir Fergus Millar, 'Triumvirate and Principate', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 63 (1973), 50–67; and Werner Eck, *The Age of Augustus*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Oxford, 2003).

[2] Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939); see now John A. Lobur, *Consensus, Concordia, and the Formation of Roman Imperial Ideology* (London, 2008).

[3] E. Judge, '*Res Publica Restituta*: A Modern Illusion?' in J. A. S. Evans (ed.), *Polis and Imperium: Studies in Honour of Edward Togo Salmon* (Toronto, 1974), 279–313; and N. Mackie, '*Res Publica Restituta*: A Roman Myth', in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin literature and Roman history IV* (Brussels, 1986), 302–40.

[4] All dates are AD unless otherwise stated.   [5] See Uwe Walter in this volume.

historical writings under the general heading of 'history', before turning to generic difference and its political significance.

Three issues arise in assessing the interplay of historiography and political change. First, so little has survived from the considerable number of historians of the period that any broad conclusions about Roman imperial historiography are necessarily speculative. Second, the history of extant authors' reception has shaped our understanding of their political insights. Finally, extant historians and biographers represent varying perspectives on the imperial system because of their class, provincial origin, and political position. The Latin historical texts we have from the first to fourth centuries are the *Historia Romana* of Velleius Paterculus, published in the reign of Tiberius (30); the *Agricola, Historiae*, and *Annales* of Cornelius Tacitus, published in the reigns of Nerva (98), Trajan (*c.*109), and Hadrian (*c.*118); and the *Vitae Caesarum* of Suetonius Tranquillus, published also in the reign of Hadrian. The other extant text considered here is the problematic *Historia Augusta* (*HA*)—a series of imperial biographies (including biographies of imperial pretenders) from Hadrian to Carinus (117–285).[6] This is ascribed to six authors, explicitly declaring Suetonian influence,[7] but is now generally agreed to be the work of one, writing in the last decades of the fourth century under the emperor Theodosius. He was probably a scholar, perhaps a legal specialist, and maybe of Gallic origin.[8] The earlier authors are all of 'provincial' origin: Velleius from Campania, Tacitus from Narbonese Gaul, and Suetonius from Umbria or Numidia. Tacitus reached the highest senatorial positions, serving as consul and proconsul, while Velleius and Suetonius came from equestrian and military backgrounds. Velleius reached the rank of praetor, while Suetonius served in imperial administration. All three would have relied upon the support of emperors under whom they were politically active, but the fortunes of Velleius and Suetonius in particular were bound up with the emperors Tiberius and Hadrian. Each writer's career reflects the increasingly broad and diverse spectrum of citizens with which the emperor was engaged, and their histories present some of the different responses to the imperial system current in Rome at the time.[9]

Each writer's work has been differently received: in some cases considered as offering an objective historical viewpoint; in others dismissed as mendacity or fraud. The *HA*, for example, was an important source for Petrarch as much as for Gibbon, but is now held of little historical value. The works of Tacitus have, since their emergence in the late fifteenth century, exercised considerably more

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[6] For Ammianus Marcellinus, see David Potter in this volume.

[7] *MB* 4.5; and *Prob.* 2.7.

[8] Ronald Syme, *The Historia Augusta: A Call for Clarity* (Bonn, 1971); id., *Emperors and Biography: Studies in the Historia Augusta* (Oxford, 1971); and Tony Honoré, 'Scriptor Historiae Augustae', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 77 (1987), 156–76.

[9] Dylan Sailor, *Writing and Empire in Tacitus* (Cambridge, 2008).

historical and literary influence than the others.[10] (This is striking when we consider that the evidence for Tacitus' influence in antiquity is almost non-existent.[11]) Tacitus' decision to begin his historical inquiries with Augustus' death has irrevocably shaped our historical understanding of the period as distinctly imperial, and of the Augustan restoration as a transition from republic to Principate. The span of Suetonius' work supplements this Tacitean vision of history; by starting his imperial biographies with the life of Julius Caesar he traces the beginnings of autocracy in the deeds of that remarkable individual. Implicit in the Suetonian series of biographies is the development of one-man rule at Rome from its abortive beginnings to its full establishment, where the later emperors only represent different variations on a familiar theme.[12] By contrast, Velleius' work spans imperial and republican history, beginning before the foundation of Rome.[13] Hence Velleius' interpretation of the imperial period promotes continuity rather than change, yet the scope of his work only seems peculiar when viewed alongside the exclusively imperial concerns of Suetonius and Tacitus.

Velleius' history is unusual for other reasons, but if we look at it in the context of the lost historical texts of the time, we will find that many of these cover both republican and imperial periods. Livy's monumental history in the Augustan era ended with the death of Tiberius' brother Drusus in 9 BC. The Elder Seneca's history probably covered from the civil war between Caesar and Pompey in 49 BC to the death of the emperor Tiberius in 37; Cremutius Cordus, who died in the reign of Tiberius, wrote a history spanning the civil wars and the beginning of the principate.[14] The tradition of 'continuing' histories also provides insight: historians would begin their narratives at the point where an illustrious predecessor had finished. While this primarily signalled allegiance or emulation,[15] it could also promote the sense of an overarching history to which each individual contributed his chapter. Thus Livy's history is perhaps continued by Aufidius Bassus, who is in turn continued by the elder Pliny. Asinius Pollio's history is continued by the elder Seneca. These authors too were from Italian and provincial towns, and some were politically active as senators or equestrians.

[10] Ronald Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958); R. Martin, *Tacitus* (London, 1981); Rhiannon Ash, *Tacitus* (London, 2006); and K. Schellhase, *Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought* (Chicago, 1976) on Tacitus' Renaissance influence.

[11] Ronald Mellor, *Tacitus* (London, 1993), 138–9.

[12] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius: The Scholar and His Caesars* (London, 1983), 61–2, attributes the decline in detail to decline in interest. I think that the increased brevity of later lives points to the way in which the early lives perform the dual task of representing the individual emperor and of establishing imperial themes and patterns.

[13] A. J. Woodman, *Velleius Paterculus: The Tiberian Narrative (2.94–131)* (Cambridge, 1977), 28–56; John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge, 1997), 29; and Alain Gowing, 'The Imperial Republic of Velleius Paterculus', in John Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (London, 2007), 411–18.

[14] Alain Gowing, *Empire and Memory: The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture* (Cambridge, 2005), 32–4, presents other examples.

[15] Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography*, 237–41.

This context gives us some sense of how many writers were engaged in representing, and perhaps critically evaluating, the transformation from senatorial to imperial government. But it could also lead us to question whether *all* these historians saw a transformation, whether they wrote histories of continuity or of change.

NOVUS STATUS

One difficulty for political writing (and for our interpretation of it) is the way in which the new principate continued to employ senatorial and consular government. Elections continued to be held for all the major magistracies; proconsular governors continued to go out to provincial posts; the management of the city and empire of Rome continued to be debated in senate. These facts enabled ancient—and modern—historical interpretations of the period as a time of continuity. Yet the overriding authority of the emperor, and the way in which he acceded to the position of emperor, remained unconstitutional in a strictly republican sense,[16] and his impact on the 'usual' senatorial business becomes the focus of histories of political change. Tacitus employs the rhetoric of empty appearance when speaking of the imperial senate: early in his narrative of the Tiberian period he refers to the 'simulacrum of liberty' maintained in senatorial debate and in the exercise of tribunician powers (*Ann.* 1.77.3). Tacitus suggests that the senatorial motion is just that—going through the motions: an empty procedure divorced from the reality of political power. Yet the notorious ambiguity of Tacitus' language makes it difficult to conclude that true senatorial efficacy is impossible under emperors.[17] Later in the Tiberian narrative he uses the phrase 'the image of antiquity' about a senatorial discussion (*Ann.* 3.60.1), which could be either a cynical recasting of the discussion as charade, or a realistic acknowledgement that, in the commentators' words, 'it was as near to *antiquitas* as one could get, given the conditions of the time'.[18] Similar language is employed in the *HA* when Tacitus' supposed descendant is elected emperor in 275 to the rejoicing of senators who 'believed that antiquity had been restored' (*HA Tac.* 19.6). Whether the author dwells ironically upon the word 'believed' or not, a political point is being made about the role of the senate in an autocratic state. What I intend to do in this section is examine the rhetoric employed by each author when talking about the Augustan 'constitution', and to consider what this tells us about their historical vision of the period, or even about contemporary interpretations.

One difficulty we face is that none of the political language of the first century BC onwards precisely delineates either the traditional senatorial/consular or the

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[16] I use 'constitutional' loosely; the Roman state had no formal written constitution: T. Corey Brennan, 'Power and Process under the Republican "Constitution"', in Harriet I. Flower, (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic* (Cambridge, 2004), 31–58.

[17] Ellen O'Gorman, *Irony and Misreading in the Annals of Tacitus* (Cambridge, 2000), 41–5.

[18] A. J. Woodman and R. H. Martin, *The Annals of Tacitus: Book 3* (Cambridge, 1996), ad loc.

new autocratic government. This is evident when we look at the modern political terms used of the period—'republican' and 'imperial'—for these English derivatives do not provide a clear guide to the Latin meanings. *Res publica* does not denote an exclusively republican/senatorial constitution, but rather refers to a wide range of conditions which concern the community of Rome: its most basic meaning is simply 'things that belong to the people'.[19] Similarly, *imperium*, when it is not used of the power of an individual, often denotes Rome's sway over other peoples: an empire which existed long before the centre's move to autocracy. The same can be said of other political terms, such as *status*, as well as the terms of power and authority—*potentia, potestas, arbitrium, auctoritas*—and the titles of the autocrat—*imperator, princeps, pater patriae* and, a century later, *Caesar*. In short, the language in which the principate was described (if not defined) was various, and subject to contrasting interpretations. Consequently, what becomes crucial in our reading of such texts is, first, our sensitivity to the range of meanings conveyed by these terms and their combination and, second, our attention to how historians use them to present the phenomenon of the autocrat in relation to a past which he continues or disrupts.

Although Suetonius' text is the latest to deal with Augustus, I begin with him because he presents what are usually taken to be Augustus' own words:

He twice considered restoring the republic (*de reddenda re p. bis cogitavit*): first, immediately after the defeat of Antony [31 BC], remembering that Antony often made that accusation against him, that it was his fault that it had not been restored; then later when he was weary from a long illness [23 BC], when he even summoned the magistrates and the senate to his house and handed over an account of the empire to them (*rationarium imperii*). But thinking again that as a private citizen (*privatum*) he would be subject to some danger, and the republic would be rashly committed to the control of many men (*plurium aribitrio*), he continued to hold on to it: it is doubtful which was better—the intention or the outcome. He continually displayed this intention, and even gave voice to it in a particular edict, with these words: 'May I be permitted to set up the republic safe and secure in its proper place and enjoy the reward of that achievement which I desire, that I be called the author of the best government (*ut optimi status auctor dicar*) and when I die I take with me the hope that the foundations of the republic remain in their place where I have put them.' And he fulfilled his own prayer for himself by striving in every way, so that nobody would regret the new government (*novus status*).   (Suet. *Aug.* 28)

Suetonius clearly represents the Augustan regime as something new when he calls it a *novus status*; if this is not Augustus' own term, it certainly echoes his expressed hope that the *status* is *optimus.* Thus it simultaneously attests to Augustus' good faith in restoring the *status quo*, at the same time as it undermines the conservative rhetoric which restoration implies. This is pointed up by Suetonius' image of Augustus reconsidering his impulse to hand over control of the state,

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[19] Millar, 'Triumvirate and Principate', 63. Eleanor Cowan's forthcoming monograph will present a detailed analysis of the developing concept of *res publica*.

where his use of the term *arbitrium* highlights the contradiction of Augustus' own words in the *Res Gestae*. 'I transferred the state from my own power (*potestate*) to the control (*arbitrium*) of the senate and the people of Rome' (*RGDA* 34).[20] Instead, Suetonius has Augustus reflect upon the dangers of entrusting the state to *plurium arbitrio*; the replacement of the precise political designation SPQR with the more vague and threatening *plures* softens the point of the contradiction (and of the rupture with traditional government) underscoring instead the desirability of the *novus status*. At the same time, Suetonius evokes the future power of the princeps by representing Augustus in political situations and terms more suitable to his own time. Augustus summoning magistrates to his *domus* to receive the imperial accounts adumbrates the role played by the *domus* (both the family and the physical house) in promoting and sustaining the power of the princeps. So too, Augustus' reflection on the dangers he faces if he relinquishes control uses the common republican term *privatus*, for a citizen not holding public office. But, by pairing Caesar's dangers with that of the *res publica*, Suetonius points to the increasingly close association of princeps and commonwealth, the sense in which the emperor is entirely a public persona.[21] This has consequences also for biographies, whose focus on the emperor's private life becomes implicitly political.

The opening phrase of this Suetonius passage—*de reddenda re publica*, frequently translated as 'on the restoration of the republic'—should be examined alongside Velleius' account of roughly the same period (Velleius was writing in the generation immediately after the Augustan settlement). Here too we find language of restoration, but applied more precisely and giving us more of a sense of what it might mean for a contemporary Roman to say that the commonwealth had been returned to him. The language of restoration is applied, not to the governance of the state—the *arbitrium* of Suetonius—but to the return of law and order to the civic community. The following extract is taken from a more lengthy summation of Augustus' contribution to the state.

In the 20th year [29 BC] all civil wars were concluded, all foreign wars laid to rest, peace was recalled (*revocata pax*), the madness of armed violence everywhere lulled; the law regained (*restituta*) its force, judgement its authority, the senate its majesty; the traditional limits of magistrates' power was restored (*redactum*):…the original and ancient form of the republic was recalled (*prisca illa et antiqua rei publicae forma revocata*). Cultivation returned to fields (*rediit cultus agris*), honour to sacred things, safety to people, secure possession of goods to all.   (Velleius *Hist. Rom.* 2.89.3–4)

Velleius' characterization of the principate makes more explicit what is latent in the Suetonius extract. The principate of Augustus is viewed in relation, not only to the ancient republic of Rome, but also the civil wars which Augustus finally

[20]   See Alison Cooley in this volume.
[21]   Suetonius is here drawing on the sense of *privatus*, which appears elsewhere in imperial literature, as 'subject' as opposed to 'ruler'. Cf. Tacitus *Agr.* 39.2, *Hist.* 1.49.2.

ended. The language of peace pervades the chapter from which this is taken, and the benefits of a community at peace are understood in a practical sense. A phrase like *redit cultus agris* evokes the symbols of a peaceful community which reach back to the Homeric description of two cities on Achilles' shield in the *Iliad*, but it also, as A. J. Woodman observes, points to the fact that 'twenty years of civil war had considerably affected the Italian countryside'.[22] In place of the opposition Republic/Principate, or oligarchy/autocracy, we have the opposition community at war/community at peace, which overwrites any political distinctions concerning the governance of the community at peace. The other striking feature of Velleius' rhetoric is the emphasis on restoration and return, signalled both by the prevalence of the prefix *re-* and by the summary phrase *prisca illa et antiqua rei publicae forma revocata.* The repetition of *revocata* from earlier in the passage (*revocata pax*) serves to strengthen the opposition between war and peace, and to suggest that the most important characteristic of the *res publica* is not who governs it, but whether it is at peace. And 'peace' here is understood in practical terms, as a state of affairs where laws are in force, and state officials have authority to carry out the duties of government.[23]

It has been traditional for some years now to dismiss Velleius' historical interpretations as flattery (though the move to accept praise of the Principate in recent years may represent a scholarly neo-conservatism).[24] Yet if we consider Velleius' 'restoration scene' alongside Suetonius' image of Augustus declining to relinquish control of the state, we actually find very little contradiction, mainly because of the different focus employed by each author. Velleius concentrates on the effect of the Augustan Principate upon citizens of different classes: those affected by proscriptions, for example, who would risk the loss of their property and lives. Later he points to the experience of the top ranks of senators, whom he calls the *principes viri* (2.89.4); having received triumphal and consular honours in the past, they are encouraged by Augustus to perform acts of euergetism which enhance both the city and its benefactors. Suetonius, on the other hand, is talking about the highest ranks in relation to the government of Rome. When Augustus considers 'restoring the republic' in Suetonius' passage, he does not mean a return to law and order—by 23 BC, this has already taken place. What Augustus almost hands over to the magistrates of Rome is an 'account'—a

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[22] A. J. Woodman, *Velleius Paterculus: The Caesarian and Augustan Narrative (2.41–93)* (Cambridge, 1983), ad loc.

[23] Stefan Weinstock, 'Pax and the "Ara Pacis"', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 50 (1960), 44–58.

[24] Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, 488–9; Patrick Sinclair, *Tacitus the Sententious Historian: A Sociology of Rhetoric in Annales 1–6* (Pennsylvania, 1995), 17. Recent work on Velleius is led by Woodman, *Velleius Paterculus: The Tiberian Narrative*; id., *Velleius Paterculus: The Caesarian and Augustan Narrative*; Ulrich Schmitzer, *Velleius Paterculus und das Interesse an der Geschichte im Zeitalter des Tiberius* (Heidelberg, 2000); Gowing, 'The Imperial Republic of Velleius Paterculus'; John A. Lobur, '*Festinatio* (haste), *Brevitas* (concision), and the Generation of Imperial Ideology in Velleius Paterculus', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 137 (2007), 211–30; and id., *Consensus, Concordia, and the Formation of Roman Imperial Ideology.*

financial summary—of the empire, which is eventually read in senate after his death, as the end of the *vita* makes clear. 'In the third scroll there was a summary (*breviarium*) of the whole empire, how many soldiers were enlisted overall, how much money there was in the treasury and the imperial exchequer, and what taxes remained to be paid. And he added the names of the freedmen and slaves from whom an account (*ratio*) could be demanded' (Suet. *Aug.* 101.4).

While the senior magistrates at Rome could have found their traditional authority limited or curtailed by having partial, or no, access to these accounts, the imperial control at this level of administration would not preclude an ordinary citizen, nor even a senator, from enjoying the benefits of the Augustan regime in the ways outlined by Velleius. It appears upon rereading that when Suetonius speaks of *re publica reddenda* he might be speaking of high-level administration which he terms *arbitrium*, and which is made tangible by the *breviarium* or the *rationarium.* Indeed, Suetonius may be playing on the fairly common phrase for handing over an account (financial or otherwise): *rationem reddere.*[25] In Tacitus' account of Tiberius' accession to rule he has the new emperor's adviser make a play on the term *ratio constat* to similar effect, when he says 'it is a necessary condition of rule, that the accounts only balance if they are returned to one man alone' (*non aliter ratio constet quam si uni reddatur*) (*Ann.* 1.6.3).

Turning to Tacitus, we find the language of power remobilized to create a very different historical analysis, which positions history too in a different relation to the politics it records. First, however, I want to pause to consider the consequence of the historical interpretations presented so far for the genre of historical writing. Granted, neither Velleius nor Suetonius gives us a history proper, but we can consider how the representation of the principate which has emerged from reading their texts impacts upon history's content and its aims. Content and aims are united: the political focus of history is directed towards a reader who is interested in political action.[26] The exemplary tradition of Roman historical writing (and of Roman culture more generally) put this delivery of history's objectives into practice. But, as many scholars have observed, the history of the principate does not translate so directly into the political praxis of its readers. If Suetonius' or Velleius' Augustus is an example to readers, he is only an example to other emperors as readers. The (relatively) straightforward exemplarity of republican history[27] is replaced by a more tangential, sidelong mode of historical–political reading, as Tacitus precisely formulates.

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[25] *OLD reddo* 13b; cf. Suet. *Galba* 9.1.

[26] Polybius 9.1.2–5, discussed by Roberto Nicolai, 'The Place of History in the Ancient World', in Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 23–5.

[27] J. D. Chaplin, *Livy's Exemplary History* (Oxford, 2000) on the shifting use of *exempla* in Livy; Gowing, *Empire and Memory* on Republican *exempla* transformed by Imperial use; and Matthew Roller, *Constructing Autocracy: Aristocrats and Emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome* (New Jersey, 2001), 88–97 on the philosophical dilemma of exemplarity for Roman Stoicism.

Therefore, just as once, when the plebs were in power or the senate had influence, men who were wise and attuned to the times learnt how to know the nature of the commons (*vulgi natura*) and how they could be kept in check, or the character of the senate and the aristocracy (*senatus et optimatium ingenia*), so now, when the government has been turned on its head and there is no other solution than one man rule, it is relevant to research and pass on the following knowledge; since few can through foresight tell honesty from evil (*prudentia honesta ab deterioribus*), useful things from harmful (*utilia ab noxiis*), and most people are taught by the experience of others.   (Tac. *Ann.* 4.33.2)

Tacitus does not continue the 'simple' model of learning from history into the new era, which entails learning about the nature (*natura*) and character (*ingenium*) of the ruling group.[28] (These are key terms of biographical understanding.[29]) Instead, Tacitus retreats into more abstract language. We can speculate that the actions he would class as *honesta* or *utilia* are the actions of senators under the Principate (we might consider, for example, his criticism of the dangerous and ineffective protests of Thrasea Paetus under Nero [*Ann.* 14.21.1] as neither prudent nor useful). But Tacitus' rhetoric seems to translate these actions from the political sphere to the ethical. This passage is taken from a significant section of the *Annales*, where Tacitus reflects on the constraints which the principate as subject-matter imposes, and recounts the treason-trial of the historian Cremutius Cordus. Hence Tacitus creates an ideal, and perhaps idealized, republican history, seamlessly merging with political understanding and action.

   Throughout Tacitus' histories, moreover, he is concerned to portray the alienation of the senatorial class from the workings of power. In his historical vision, both civil war and principate combine to form an insurmountable barrier between the imperial senator and an irrevocable republican praxis. As he says, in a rare rhetorical question near the start of his *Annales*, describing the conditions in 14: 'at home the state was at peace. The names of magistracies remained the same; young men had been born after Actium, even many old men had been born in civil war: how many men were left who had seen the republic?' (*quotus quisque reliquus, qui rem publicam vidisset?*) (Tac. *Ann.* 1.3.7.). This rare use of *res publica* as something different from the Principate is sustained by Tacitus' return to narrative immediately afterwards in terms which subvert the political terminology of Velleius and Suetonius. The *optimus status* of Augustus' hopes (attested elsewhere as *felicissimus status*, which Velleius also makes use of [30]) was glossed by Suetonius as *novus status*. Tacitus at the start of the *Annales* (and in the passage from book 4 cited above) names it *conversus* or *versus status*, emphasizing change and revolution over continuity or restoration.[31] In case we missed the point,

   [28] O'Gorman, *Irony and Misreading in the Annals of Tacitus*, 97–105.
   [29] Christopher Pelling, 'Velleius and Biography: The Case of Julius Caesar', in Eleanor Cowan, (ed.), *Velleius* (Wales, forthcoming).
   [30] *Hist. Rom.* 2.91.2; and cf. *Hist. Rom.* 2.131.1 with Woodman, *Velleius Paterculus: The Tiberian Narrative*, ad loc.
   [31] F. R. D. Goodyear, *The Annals of Tacitus, Annals 1.1–54* (Cambridge, 1972) on *Ann.* 1.2.2.

Tacitus spells it out with an absolute denial of continuity, in terms which echo and refute Velleius:

Igitur verso civitatis statu nihil usquam prisci et integri moris: omnes exuta aequalitate iussa principis aspectare.   (Tac. Ann. 1.4.1)

Then with the government of Rome overturned there was nothing anywhere of original and uncorrupted custom: everyone shed their equal status and looked to the commands of the princeps.

Prisca illa et antiqua rei publicae forma revocata…principes viri triumphisque et amplissimis honoribus functi hortatu principis ad ornandam urbem inlecti sunt.

(Velleius 2.89.4)

The original and ancient form of the republic was recalled…the principal men, who had achieved triumphs and the greatest honours, were selected by the encouragement of the princeps to beautify the city.

Tacitus' generalized comment contradicts the example given by Velleius, where the *principes viri* are honoured by the encouragement, not the command of the princeps. The very presence of *princeps* twice in one sentence to refer to both Augustus and the great military leaders attests to the *aequalitas* prevailing in the Principate of Velleius' history. By contrast, Tacitus' Romans look to the command of the princeps and have 'voluntarily' shed their *aequalitas.*

Tacitus' concern is mostly with the senatorial class, as he makes more explicit in his earlier—extraordinarily dense—account of Augustus' rise to power. Outdoing Velleius in compression,[32] he covers civil war and settlements in one sentence of twelve lines, the middle section of which I quote:

Caesar the last standing general, putting aside the name of triumvir he called himself, acted as consul and was content with tribunician power for protecting the plebs, while he seduced the army with donatives, the people with corn doles, everyone with the sweetness of peace (*otium*), gradually he rose up, he took upon himself all duties of senate, magistrates and laws.   (Tac. *Ann.* 1.2.1)

The benefits of the *pax Augusta* so eloquently articulated by Velleius are reduced to the more morally ambivalent *otium*.[33] But more difficult is Tacitus' claim that Augustus took over all the duties of senate, magistrates, and laws—a sweeping statement which cannot be pinned down to a specific time. Nevertheless, it sustains Tacitus' vision of the Principate as a disruption, and even a violation, of

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[32] Lobur, '*Festinatio* (haste), *Brevitas* (concision), and the Generation of Imperial Ideology in Velleius Paterculus', on speed in Velleius.
[33] Goodyear, *The Annals of Tacitus*, ad loc. on this term's traditional role in accounts of 'enervation and moral decline'.

republican government. Even his later, more precise reference to Augustan legis-
lation continues in this savagely ironic vein, where lawgiving is hemmed in by
the terminology of power, and laws become not instruments for assuring civi-
lized behaviour, but chains for the oppression of citizens. 'Finally in his sixth
consulship [28 BC] Caesar Augustus, safe in his power, abolished what he had
commanded as a triumvir, and gave us laws which we could make use of in times
of peace and a princeps' (Tac. *Ann.* 3.28.2).[34]

It would be easy to dismiss Tacitus' historical vision as uniquely pessimistic
and rather skewed, perhaps as the result of his experiences under Domitian. But
his political views are more subtle than they might initially seem. His glance at
the provincial acceptance of Augustus' rule, for example, shows us the experi-
ence of the Roman system from another angle, and provides a corrective to those
who think Tacitus idealizes the Republic. 'Nor did the provinces reject this
government (*statum*) of the state, since they were suspicious of the rule of senate
and people on account of the power struggles and the greed of the governors,
while the laws were of no help, since they had been disrupted by violence,
intrigue and finally money' (Tac. *Ann.* 1.2.2). The rule of law does not appear as
a symbol of the Republic or of its restoration. The perspective of the provinces
presents a different historical vision—a different experience of both Republic
and principate which undermines some of the assumptions prevailing at the
centre. The provinces seem to figure here (and elsewhere in the *Annales*) as
important readers of history, thoroughly understanding the nature of their
rulers, whether exposing the inherent corruption of republican government, or,
later in the narrative, revealing by their expectations symptoms of the new tyran-
nical regime.[35] This chapter of the *Annales*, which presents Augustus viewed by
different classes from the centre and finally from the margins of empire, has a
structure which recurs in biographies, and organizes the difference between
Republic and Principate in spatial rather than in temporal terms. This 'provin-
cial' view of emperors gains substantially in authority after the death of Nero,
when emperors are made outside of Rome.

We have already seen how the *HA* picks up on on this rhetoric of the early
Principate in the narrative of the emperor Tacitus' brief reign. One of the many
letters 'quoted' in this text recapitulates all of the political catchphrases of antiq-
uity, restoration, and the rule of law.

Let all allies and nations know that the republic has returned to its ancient state (*in
antiquum statum redisse rem publicam*), and the senate chooses its emperors, or rather the

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[34] On the difficulty of translating the last phrase, see Woodman and Martin, *The Annals of
Tacitus*, ad loc.
[35] In the reign of Tiberius, for example, provincial petitions bypass senate (3.60) and their
requests to honour the emperor as a god force Tiberius to declare his policy on imperial cult
(4.37).

senate has itself been made emperor, laws are to be sought from senate, barbarian kings will supplicate the senate, peace and war are to be negotiated by the senate's authority.

<div align="right">(*HA Tac.* 12.1)</div>

Senatorial optimism is overshadowed by the reader's knowledge of Tacitus' early demise, but there is an important perspective inherent in this rejoicing. The point is not that peace and war are decided by senate rather than by princeps, but that peace, war, and princeps are made by senate rather than by army. And this anxiety about the army, all too evident by the late fourth century, was already emerging in Tacitus' history three centuries earlier.

<div align="center">

QUOTUS QUISQUE RELIQUUS?
THE MEMORY OF THE REPUBLIC

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Alain Gowing has observed that, over the first century of autocracy at Rome, the republican past came to mean different things, both politically and historically. This is particularly true of the ideological shifts which can be observed during the Flavian dynasty of 69–98. As Gowing remarks, 'one of the hallmarks of the Flavian period is its capacity to individuate itself, to dissociate itself from both its recent [imperial] and distant [republican] past.'[36] Yet one way in which the Flavian dynasty replays some of the issues of the early Principate is its emergence out of civil war, so that the rhetoric of Vespasian's reign can appeal to the benefits of peace in a manner similar to Augustus'. Thus Flavian emperors and historians recast the Julio-Claudian dynasty in the light of their present. In Tacitus' first extended historical work, the *Historiae*, the civil war of 69 is grounded, not in an idealized, but in a turbulent, republican past. This narrative recalls civil wars not only between Octavian (Augustus) and Antony (32–30 BC), or Julius Caesar and Pompey (49–48 BC), but also between Marius and Sulla (86–82 BC). In fact, the civil war that led to the establishment of the Principate is never mentioned in isolation, but is always situated in the context of previous civil wars, which are reconfigured to serve present needs. So, for example, when Vitellius' soldiers warn him not to surrender to Vespasian, they remind him that 'Pompey was not left unharmed by Caesar, nor Antony by Augustus' (*Hist.* 3.66.3). Their misre-membering of the violence of the Republic leads to even worse violence in the present. The memory of Marius and Sulla has particular poignancy in the third book of the *Historiae*, when Vespasian's forces march on the city itself, and Vespasian's brother is besieged on the Capitol. When the Capitol is burnt down by the Vitellians, it serves as a complex memory site for different stages in Roman history, including its rededication by Sulla in 82 BC. Elsewhere in the *Historiae*,

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[36] Gowing, *Empire and Memory*, 104.

the memory of civil wars allows Tacitus to meditate on the nature of conflict and autocracy in politics.

After Galba, the first emperor of the year, has been murdered, and Otho holds command through the Praetorian Guard, news arrives that Aulus Vitellius, governor of Germany, has been declared emperor by the German legions. In portraying the general state of mind in the city, Tacitus draws on a similar scene in the Neronian poet Lucan's epic of Caesar's war with Pompey,[37] and represents the Roman people recalling the memory of earlier civil wars. 'Recalling not the recent examples of a savage peace-time [Nero's reign], but the memory of civil wars, they spoke of the city taken so many times by her own armies, the laying waste of Italy, the sacking of provinces, Pharsalia, Philippi, †Perusia and Mutina†, the well-known names of public disaster' (*Hist.* 1.50.2). Thus far the people of Rome construct a narrative of continuity between the great civil battles of the first century BC and what they anticipate for their own times. Their anticipation is coloured by Tacitean hindsight; there were no major attacks on Rome itself in the Caesarian civil wars, so the line *captam totiens Urbem* is more relevant to the forthcoming conflict than to the past. Thus, although the memories of the people seem to draw a sharp distinction between civil war and imperial reign ('recalling *not* the recent *saeva pax*,[38] but civil war') it becomes clear that the memory of civil war here continues to be bound up with the idea of the Principate, when the emperor's return to Rome was an object of popular dread. Tacitus' Romans go on to discuss the question of what civil wars are fought for; here a gulf widens between past and present.

The whole world was nearly turned upside-down, even when the struggle for primacy (*de principatu*) was waged between good men...empire (*imperium*) was left when C. Julius, when Caesar Augustus was victor; the republic (*rem publicam*) would have been left if Pompey or Brutus had won: now they were expected to pray for the victory of Otho or Vitellius? Either prayer was impious, to hope for either of these two was execrable, in a war between these men you would only know one thing, that the worse man would win.   (*Hist.* 1.50.3)

As F. R. D. Goodyear remarks, here is one of only three instances where Tacitus seems to use *res publica* to mean a political constitution, yet, significantly, the two instances in the *Historiae* are put in the mouths of historical characters: here the generalized Roman public, in indirect discourse; earlier, in a speech delivered by the emperor Galba.[39] The initial point in this passage is that earlier civil

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[37] Lucan *Pharsalia* 2.68–232; cf. Ellen O'Gorman, 'Shifting Ground: Lucan, Tacitus and the Landscape of Civil War', *Hermathena*, 158 (1995), 117–31.

[38] Cynthia Damon, *Tacitus, Histories Book I*, (Cambridge, 2003), ad loc. for similar terminology used of specific reigns.

[39] Goodyear, *The Annals of Tacitus*, on *Annales* 1.3.7, examined in section one. Holly Haynes, *The History of Make-Believe: Tacitus on Imperial Rome* (California, 2003) on Galba's misunderstanding of republic.

wars were fought in defence of the republican constitution, but that is an oversimplified view of those wars, and is undercut by the introduction of this idea, where the men of the past are said to fight *de principatu*—for primacy, but also for the Principate—and to leave the empire intact—the spatial empire of Rome, but also imperial rule. The Republic, moreover, only figures as an unfulfilled and unfulfillable condition, forever associated with the defeated leaders, and activated only in the polemical context of new civil wars.

The memory of 'republican' civil war, then, operates at different levels for Tacitus' Romans. It unites them with the past in a continuity of suffering, but the stakes of the earlier wars demonstrate the peculiar misery of their present situation, caught not between *imperium* and *res publica*, but between a bad and a worse man. This turn from the political to the ethical continues for the remainder of the chapter, as the possibility appears of Vespasian declaring war, and that hope is underpinned by the authorial voice reminding us that Vespasian 'alone among all previous emperors changed for the better when he ruled' (*Hist.* 1.50.4).

The political situation at Rome has moved from debates over systems to issues of character. This move is explored, however, through the examples of the state at war rather than in peace, and thus represents a different outlook on the nature of rule from the passages we examined in the first section. This period of Roman history lays bare the hidden truth of political power as founded on military strength: as Tacitus puts it 'the secret of state (*imperii*), that a princeps can be created somewhere other than Rome' (*Hist.* 1.4.2). The armies become key political actors, whose relationships with emperors and leaders are constructed around personal loyalty and sustained through reciprocal benefit. As in the *HA*, this military context operates independently from the centre, and thus exposes a different nexus of relationships between republican past and imperial present. It also presents a complicated relationship between character and causality, in which the judgements both of historical individuals and of the historian are involved.

THE JUDGEMENT OF CHARACTER

Though the interpretation of character is, as we have seen, a complex process,[40] the aim of this analysis is generally directed to explaining the behaviour of the subject as a political agent. And yet the manifestation of character is often displayed in behaviour which does not strictly belong to the public sphere, and which, for a historian such as Tacitus, is sometimes unsuitable for the grandeur of the genre. Hence the imperial historian is often drawn away from the

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[40] Christopher Pelling (ed.), *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature* (Oxford, 1990).

traditions of historical inquiry even as he attempts to fulfil the demands of history. In this section I will examine more closely Tacitus' avoidance of 'low' material,[41] in order to see what this might illuminate for us about both historical and biographical discourses.

Historiography conventionally defines its representation of character against that of biography in relation to two criteria: the kind of material included and what that material is meant to illuminate. In the first case, events or actions which are 'large' or 'weighty' (*magnum, grande*), and so more appropriate to 'history', are distinguished from those which are 'minor' or 'trivial' (*parvum/breve, leve*). This distinction obviously informs Tacitus' digression on the nature of his *Annales* at 4.32–33, which we examined briefly above. As John Moles has shown in an exhaustive study,[42] Tacitus here draws on a number of antecedents. But the most striking parallel is with his older contemporary Plutarch's well-known comment on the nature of material used in biography: Plutarch remarks that 'a small (*brachu*) thing like a phrase or a joke often presents greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or the greatest armaments, or sieges of cities' (Plut. *Alex.* 1).[43] Plutarch's choice of military subject matter as the subject of history, in contrast to the slight material of biographical character sketches, may be in part determined by the context of this particular pair of biographies, the lives of Alexander and Julius Caesar.[44] Tacitus, of course, also uses grand military action as a point of contrast with his history, which is a narrow and inglorious account of tyrannical rule. But where Plutarch defends his inclusion of trivial detail because it illuminates *character* (he goes on to use the analogy of a portrait painter), Tacitus sees trivial detail as ultimately causally linked to important *action*:

I am not unaware that many of these events which I have recorded, and will record, will seem small perhaps, and trivial (*levia*) to recollect…It will not however be without benefit to look closely at these things which seem at first glance trivial (*primo aspectu levia*), from which often arises the motive for great actions (*magnarum rerum*).

(*Ann.* 4.32.1…2)

Despite this reclaiming of incidental detail to the service of historical causality, what also distinguishes Tacitus from Plutarch, and from the other authors under review in this chapter, is his avoidance of certain types of trivial matter. The 'phrase or jest' referred to by Plutarch is replaced in this part of the *Annales* by a

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[41]   Syme, *Tacitus.*

[42]   John Moles, 'Cry Freedom: Tacitus *Annals* 4.32–35', *Histos*, 2 (1998), http://www.dur.ac.uk/Classics/histos/1998/moles.html.

[43]   The distinction here is between *brachus*, 'small', and *epiphanés*, 'outstanding' or 'notable'.

[44]   Christopher Pelling, 'Breaking the Bounds: Writing about Julius Caesar', in Brian McGing and Judith Mossman (eds.), *The Limits of Ancient Biography* (Wales, 2006), 255–80; and id., 'Caesar's First Biographers: Plutarch and Suetonius', in Miriam Griffin (ed.), *A Companion to Caesar* (Cambridge, forthcoming) argues that treatment of Caesar requires the transgression of boundaries between history and biography.

formal speech of defence. In Suetonius' biographies, on the other hand, popular judgements on emperors, which in Tacitus we see mediated through indirect discourse, are presented through graffiti,[45] catchphrases,[46] and popular songs (often lewd).[47] Tiberius' unpopularity at his death is evidenced by the crowd's jingle, 'into the Tiber with Tiberius' (*Tib.* 75.1);[48] likewise, puns on emperors' names proliferate in the *HA*. Such details are significant for the way Suetonius builds up a multi-faceted portrait of each emperor, and correspond to the sort of material used today by an historian of *mentalité*;[49] the *HA*, in a similar vein, repeatedly contrasts its own 'pedestrian' style with the eloquence of high history.[50]

An illuminating contrast is Velleius' history, which operates within different and quite complex generic constraints, but which is conducted for the most part in the high style. Velleius, however, draws upon the genre of rhetorical invective in a way that differentiates his work quite starkly from the writing of Tacitus. Here, for example, is a vignette of the hated L. Munatius Plancus,[51] describing the kind of behaviour which Tacitus would never explicitly represent.

> In the midst of this preparation for war, Plancus, not motivated by judgement about choosing the right path, not from love of the state or of Caesar . . . but as a traitor spurred on by madness, since he had been the most self-abasing toady to the queen and a dependent lower even than slaves, since he had been Antony's secretary, since he had initiated and aided in the foulest of acts, since he had been venal in all things and to all men, since he painted himself blue, stripped himself naked, crowned his head with reeds, and dragging a tail behind him had crawled on his knees dancing the part of Glaucus at a banquet.   (Velleius, 2.83.1–2)

As with the Suetonian details, there is clearly a political point to this anecdote. Velleius includes it at the moment when Plancus leaves Antony for Octavian, so it undermines further his motivations for changing sides; the tenor of the anecdote, as Woodman remarks, draws on the topoi of political invective,[52] and in

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[45] Domitian erected so many arches in the city that someone wrote on one '*Arci*', punning on the Greek *arkei* 'enough' (*Dom.* 13.2); cf. *Nero* 45.2.

[46] Augustus' own catchphrases *Aug.* 87. After the revolt of Julius Vindex against Nero, his name becomes a byword: 'at night men pretended to fight with their slaves, and would call frequently for an avenger (*vindicem*)' (*Nero* 45.2); and cf. *Tib.* 75.1, discussed in main text.

[47] Julius Caesar's soldiers sing about his sexual activities, including his submission to the king of Bithynia (*Jul.* 49.4 and 51) cf. *Dom.* 14.2; and *HA Aurel.* 6.6, a detail marked as *perfrivola*.

[48] Perhaps the most notorious example is Suetonius' explicit detailing of Tiberius' sexual perversions at *Tib.* 43–4. Tacitus, conversely, merely alludes to these as 'lust' (*Ann.* 4.57.1), 'pleasures' (4.57.2), 'luxury and ill-spent leisure' (4.67.3), and 'dishonourable acts' (6.51.3).

[49] Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius*, 99–118. The *HA*'s concern with what is, or is not, trivial has more to do with the author's elaborate scholarly jokes; cf. for example, *Quad.* 11.4; 12.6.

[50] *HA Trig.* 1.1; 33.8.

[51] As Woodman, *Velleius Paterculus: The Caesarian and Augustan Narrative*, 137 remarks, Velleius always treats Plancus 'with ironical contempt'. For Plancus' life, see T. H. Watkins, *L. Munatius Plancus: Serving and Surviving in the Roman Revolution* (Atlanta, 1997).

[52] Woodman, *Velleius Paterculus: The Caesarian and Augustan Narrative*, ad loc.

particular on the kinds of invective used by Octavian's party against Antony. Indeed, Wright suggests the political speeches of the historian Asinius Pollio as a possible source for this anecdote.[53] Yet while the details of Plancus' disgraceful dance serve to pinpoint his moral and political turpitude in political discourse, including them in an historical narrative is an affront both to the dignity of the genre and to the senatorial class of Romans to which Plancus belongs. Part of the problem a writer faces when recording material of this sort is that it is unworthy of historical remembrance, since history is the record of the greatest deeds of men and nations. We see something of this tension in the preface to Cornelius Nepos' biographies of foreign generals,[54] where again the concept of triviality is invoked, alongside that of unworthiness. 'I have no doubt, Atticus, that many will judge this type of writing to be trivial (*leve*) and not sufficiently worthy (*dignum*) of the characters of great men, when they read an account of who taught music to Epaminondas, or that recorded among his virtues is that he could dance quite pleasantly and play the flute with skill' (Nepos *de viris illustribus* Praef. 1.1). Nepos, like Plutarch, initially seems to identify biographical genre (*hoc genus scripturae*), in terms of the kind of material presented. Nepos' point, however, has to do with cultural expectations of the kind of behaviour appropriate to a class of people. In other words, he explicitly addresses the Roman equestrian and senatorial orders, and their expectations of how a military commander (who would, of course come from one of these orders) would behave in private life. But, Nepos says, such expectations are culturally specific, so to present such details as music and dancing about a *foreign* general is not unworthy of his greatness or of the dignity of his class (and therefore not an implicit insult to Nepos' readers). Nepos, therefore, is not making exactly the same claim as either Plutarch or Tacitus, even though he uses similar terms; the insight his argument offers us is that trivial biographical detail not only makes political points about specific individuals, but is also judged according to how appropriate it is for the class as a whole. This leads us back to the exemplary function of history, but also to the sense that individual behaviour represents the collective. In behaving disgracefully, a man like Plancus lets down the order; in recording the behaviour, Velleius also takes responsibility for a certain 'staining' of the senatorial class.[55] As a senatorial historian, Tacitus might be doubly stained by representing such scenes.

Another possible reason for Tacitus' avoidance of this kind of *levia* could be their limited exemplary function. Livy sums up *exempla* as those 'from which

[53] Andrew Wright, 'Velleius Paterculus and L. Munatius Plancus', *Classical Philology*, 97 (2002), 178–84.
[54] Written probably sometime in the 40s BC: cf. Joseph Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos and Ancient Political Biography* (Stuttgart, 1985).
[55] On 'staining' in invective, see Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor* (New Haven, 1983).

you should take what to imitate, for your own good and that of your state, and what you should avoid, foul in its inception, foul in its outcome' (Livy *Praef.* 10). Some negative *exempla*, therefore, may not need to be spelt out; the reader needs only to know that it is inappropriate for a senator to dance, without being told that a senator should avoid stripping, painting himself blue, and tying a tail to his rear. Or, to put it another way, Tacitus shows little interest in dwelling at length on those aspects of individual behaviour which hold no redemptive potential. His biography of Agricola might be a tendentious example, since it is an encomiastic act of piety to his father-in-law; this does not stage the conflict between triviality and insight that we have seen above, concentrating instead on the recording of virtue (*memoria virtutis*).[56] The term 'virtue' repeatedly appears throughout Tacitus' prefatory defence of his choice of writing, and the biography as a whole, where both positive and negative examples have an explicit and serious political purpose.[57] As Tacitus concludes, Agricola's life and actions provide the reader with the understanding that 'it is possible for great men to live even under bad emperors' (*Agr.* 42.4), while his own career and that of his peers offers 'weighty (*grande*) evidence of submissiveness' (2.3). Here Tacitus presents us with a more serious example of how the disgrace of one senator taints the class as a whole, when he narrates how Helvidius Priscus was physically dragged from the curia by another senator, Publicius Certus. As R. M. Ogilvie comments, 'Tacitus treats as the act of the whole order…what may have been that of one person only' when he says '*our hands* took Helvidius off to jail' (*Agr.* 45.1).[58] This biography is less concerned with character than with exemplarity, and thus it signals its proximity to the genre of the funeral oration.[59] But, more precisely, Tacitus chooses to exemplify specific actions which tread the honourable middle ground between servile capitulation and impractical martyrdom—the same extremes which we have already seen generalized in the *Annales* as 'evil' and 'harmful things' (4.33.2). Thus even when Tacitus turns to representations and judgements of individuals towards whom he feels no burden of familial piety, his concerns remain the same as in the *Agricola*: to deploy character as a means of evaluating effective political action. The character of the ruler is important for Tacitus, but so too are the characters of political agents in whom Tacitus shows an active exemplary interest.

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[56] Dylan Sailor, 'Becoming Tacitus: Significance and Inconsequentiality in the Prologue of *Agricola*', *Classical Antiquity*, 23 (2004), 139–77; id., *Writing and Empire in Tacitus*; and Holly Haynes, 'Survival and Memory in the *Agricola*', *Arethusa*, 39 (2006), 149–70.

[57] A. J. Turner, 'Approaches to Tacitus' *Agricola*', *Latomus*, 56 (1997), 582–93.

[58] R. M. Ogilvie and I. A. Richmond, *Cornelii Taciti: De Vita Agricolae* (Oxford, 1967), ad loc.

[59] Ellen O'Gorman, 'Repetition and Exemplarity: Ancient Rome and the Ghosts of Modernity', in Alexandra Lianeri (ed.), *The Western Time of Ancient History: Historiographical Encounters with the Greek and Roman Pasts* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

BIOGRAPHICAL FORM

Christopher Pelling has demonstrated that character is only one aspect of the relationship between the two genres under discussion;[60] the crucial difference between biography and history is in the formal structure of the narrative. The form of the biography focuses upon the structure of the individual's life and character, rather than upon the generally annalistic structure of historical narrative. This is most obvious in the imperial lives, where we are given more details about each new emperor before his reign begins.

The structure of the Suetonian biography is not purely chronological,[61] nor is it inflexible to the demands of treating each emperor in his specificity.[62] Health, for example, is usually dealt with in the description of the emperor's physical qualities, which comes late in each life. The exception to this is Claudius, where health explains his absence from public life during his youth (*Claud.* 2–5). Generally, Suetonius follows chronology until his emperor accedes to power, at which point he groups the material thematically around achievements and qualities, grouping together, for instance, all foreign wars, building policies, or frugalities.[63] At the end of the biography he returns briefly to chronology for events surrounding the death. The life of Gaius serves as a relatively straightforward example (the most complex structures are those of Julius Caesar and Augustus):

1–7	Genealogical material
8–12	Childhood, nature, early deeds
13–21	Popularity, early reign, achievements
22	Aspirations to divinity
23–26	Domestic vices
27–33	Cruelty to those outside the family
34–35	Envy and resentment of the living and the dead
36–37	Sexual morality and extravagance
38–42	Methods of acquiring money
43–48	Campaign in Germany
49	Return to Rome
50–55	Appearance, education, habits
56–60	Death and burial

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[60] Christopher Pelling, 'Biographical History? Cassius Dio on the Early Principate', in M. J. Edwards and Simon Swain (eds.), *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1997), 117–44; and id., 'Velleius and Biography'.

[61] *Aug.* 9.

[62] David Konstan, 'Reading Politics in Suetonius', in W. J. Dominik, J. P. Garthwaite, and P. A. Roche (eds.), *Writing Politics in Imperial Rome* (Leiden, 2009) considers these traits more negatively.

[63] Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius*, 10–15; and Philip Stadter, 'Biography and History', in Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 534–6.

The central section of this life groups Gaius' actions and general behaviour thematically, but also in relation to three spheres: the domestic, the civic, and the military. Hence his incest with his sisters appears in chapter 24, not in 36–37, and his cruelty and violence towards immediate relatives in 23, not in 27–33. Indeed, the material in 27–33 is also ordered by how close Gaius' victims were to him, starting with friends and associates, and moving outwards to the generalized violence of the gladiatorial arena. This spatial organization of material outwards from the centre is mirrored by the overall structure of 23–48, and is usual in the Suetonian *Lives*.[64] The second and equally important organizing principle is moral, and is evidenced in this *Life* by the often quoted phrase about halfway through the narrative: 'Up to this point has been about the princeps, now we must tell of the monster' (*Gaius* 22.1). These structures repeat with variation across the *Lives*, and enable readers to identify both typical and individual qualities in emperors. Gaius' German campaign, for example, is a singular event, in contrast to the preceding sections of the narrative where events are grouped by type. Reading this sequentially in the context of the *Lives*, a reader would be struck by the contrast with the three preceding emperors, all of whom were experienced in battle, and whose foreign wars were narrated as types of event rather than as singular occurrences.[65]

By exploring individual emperors without the requirement to include every detail of their reigns, and with the additional perspective of their pre-imperial lives, as well as anecdotal or trivial material, Suetonius is able to focus more exclusively on the question of the origins of character. In particular, across the *Lives*, Suetonius builds up a complex picture of character formation, in which nature, family history, historical circumstance, and personal misfortune all play a part. Ancient biography does not show the same sort of interest in childhood as later examples of the genre, since the role of childhood in the development of an individual is differently understood.[66] Hence Suetonius at least tends to place educational details quite late in the *Lives*, as indications of the formed adult character: education here is an outcome rather than a process.[67] Again, Suetonius, in his explanations of character, is sensitive to the specificity of each individual. This is most interesting when we look at examples of 'inconsistency' in the emperors.

Inconsistency is a quality often associated with tyrannical rulers, since arbitrary behaviour illustrates most starkly the extent of the ruler's power. Hence it

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[64] In *Augustus*, for example, the list of his honours moves from the culminating honour of *pater patriae* (*Aug.* 58.1 cf. *RGDA* 35) through other civic honours, to Italian honours (59) and those bestowed by the provinces (60).

[65] Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius*, 16–17.

[66] Pelling (ed.), *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature*, 213–44.

[67] By contrast, Tacitus in the *Agricola* places education early in the life, mainly for the illustrative anecdote about Agricola's philosophical interest, and his mother's warning that this was inappropriate for a senator (*Agr.* 4.2–3). Narratives of education also occur early in the Antonine lives of the *HA*, to emphasize the importance of philosophy for these rulers.

is an important theme in the Suetonian *Lives*, but it is interesting that Suetonius does not consider inconsistency exclusively as a symptom of tyranny. Rather, it is immanent in individual characters, and subject to different explanations. Regarding Domitian's supposed inconsistency, Suetonius says, 'as far as one can conjecture, in addition to the nature of his disposition (*ingenii naturam*) he became greedy because of lack of resources, and cruel because of fear' (*Dom.* 3.2). Similarly Galba's inconsistency as a provincial governor is presented as an effect of Nero's tyrannical rule (*Galba* 9.1). By contrast, when dealing with Gaius, whose *saevitiam ingenii* earns him the title of monster, Suetonius says of his inconsistency, 'I may with justice attribute this man's contradictory vices of excessive arrogance and cowardice to his weak mental state' (*Gai.* 51.1). Tiberius' character, on the other hand, is occluded and only gradually revealed, which is supposed to explain the apparent mismatch between character and action: 'gradually he disclosed the ruler (*principem exseruit*) and presented himself still for a long time as inconsistent (*varium*), but more often accommodating and inclined towards the public good' (*Tib.* 33.1). Claudius' *varietas* seems to be a fundamental character flaw, rather than a symptom of the tension between character and circumstance, and is displayed in his execution of formal duties. 'In hearing and judging trials he showed an extraordinary inconsistency of mind, sometimes careful and wise, other times ill-advised and reckless, occasionally silly and like a madman' (*Claud.* 15.1).[68] The particular sphere in which Suetonius chooses to highlight Claudius' inconsistency demonstrates the impact such a flaw can have upon the state, the lives of those involved in the system, and (implicitly) the ways in which other political agents can engage with the ruler.

Because biographical form is bounded by the emperor's life, focus tends to remain at the level of the individual, rather than moving to explicit consideration of the imperial system. Here we have the extreme version of the move from constitutional to ethical discourse on politics. Certain features of Suetonius' narrative, such as the absence of *synkriseis* which would explicitly direct the reader to consideration of one emperor in relation to another, tend to keep the reader at the level of each particular imperial rule. This tendency is gradually reversed in the *HA*, as with increasing frequency the lives commence with a glance back at the preceding narrative, or conclude with a preview of what comes next.[69] As the author treats emperors or pretenders collectively, he more explicitly engages in comparison, most notably when he calls upon Sallust's famous

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[68] Elsewhere Suetonius claims that in all his actions Claudius depended upon the advice and acceded to the desires of his wives and freedmen (*Claud.* 25.5). It is interesting that their conflicting influences are not used to explain the emperor's inconsistency here; compare the role of Galba's three advisers (*Galba* 14.2). On consistency generally, see L. V. Pitcher, 'Characterization in Ancient Historiography', in Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 102–17.

[69] First at *Pesc.* 9.3; cf. *Trig.* 31.6 where the next life is introduced as if concluding a digression: *nunc ad Claudium principem redeo.*

synkrisis of Caesar and Cato to be applied to the emperors Maximus and Balbinus (*MB* 7.7). Comparison and typologizing of character, however stereotypical, encourages the reader to think beyond the individual and to further possible applications of what has been observed, even to their own lives.[70] While the *HA* may be parodying biographical tropes, it is nevertheless significant that it is supposed to be of interest 'to those who wish to imitate good emperors *and* to all of humankind' (*HA Claud.* 4.1).

As we have seen, the move to autocracy at Rome leads to renewed focus on the individual as a political force. While Tacitus' historical work scrutinizes both emperors and senators as actual or potential political agents, within the narratives of the Suetonian *Lives* and the *HA*, political efficacy seems largely limited to those holding or aiming at the position of princeps. Yet two digressions in the *HA* perhaps articulate what is implicit in Suetonius: that imperial character is not the only determinant of bad government. In the first of these, the author considers why a Syrian like Severus Alexander proved to be such a good emperor, and concludes that his choice and treatment of advisers was crucial. 'These are the men who made a Syrian into a good emperor, just as their evil friends made Roman emperors the worst even to posterity, as they weighed them down with their own vices' (*Alex.* 68.4). Later, the author concludes more pessimistically that even a good emperor is at the mercy of a bad adviser (*Aurel.* 43.4). Biography, then, far from representing a degeneration of historical understanding, or a move away from writing as a form of political participation, presents the judgement of character itself as a political activity. By characterizing and judging not only the princeps but also his advisers, biography reflects upon the nature and potential of the principate.[71]

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

86–82 BC	Civil wars between Marius and Sulla
49–48 BC	Civil war between Pompey and Caesar
32–30 BC	Civil war between Octavian and Antony
27 BC	Octavian takes the name Augustus
AD 14	Death of Augustus; publication of his *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*
AD 30	Publication of Velleius Paterculus' *Historia Romana*
AD 68	Death of Nero
AD 96	Death of Domitian

[70] A point made in different ways by Pelling, 'Biographical History?' and Konstan, 'Reading Politics in Suetonius'. Evil character in the *HA* is conveyed by 'pluralizing' emperors: 'Caligulae, Nerones and Vitelii' (*Elag.* 1.1); 'Domitians, Vitellii and Nerones' (*Car.* 1.3).

[71] Many thanks to Eleanor Cowan, Andrew Feldherr, and Christopher Pelling for their generous help.

AD 98	Accession of Trajan: publication of Tacitus' *Agricola*
AD 109	Publication of Tacitus' *Historiae*
AD 117	Death of Trajan; accession of Hadrian
AD 118–130	Publication of Tacitus' *Annales* and Suetonius' *Lives*
AD 370–400	Publication of *Historia Augusta*

KEY HISTORICAL SOURCES

Dates in parenthesis indicate the period of history for which each text is a source.

Augustus: *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (44 BC–AD 13).

Dio Cassius: *Historia Romana* (753 BC–AD 222).

'Scriptor': *Historia Augusta* (AD 117–285).

Suetonius Tranquillus: *Lives* (84 BC–AD 96).

Tacitus: *Annales* (AD 14–66); *Historiae* (AD 68–70); *Agricola* (AD 61–93).

Velleius Paterculus: *Historia Romana* (140 BC–AD 30).

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Chapter 13

The Greek Historians of Imperial Rome

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The vast gulf that separates Greek historians of the first century BC from those of the second and early third centuries AD in terms of status and interest is nearly as great as that which separates those historians from the age of Herodotus and Thucydides. The historians from the late Republic and early Principate wrestle with explaining the rise of Roman power to the Greek world—the problem set by Polybius. Those from the second century AD struggle instead with the issue that confronted aristocrats everywhere in the empire—the defence of their status within the regime. Historians of the first period tend to be public intellectuals who moved (or were moved) to Rome to service the aristocracy. Members of the second group were imperial aristocrats of the equestrian or senatorial order. After a significant gap following the end of the Severan regime in 235 AD, during which history becomes the domain of provincial intellectuals, fourth- and fifth-century historians derive from newly significant groups; they tend to be courtiers and soldiers when not bishops. Their works tend to be informed by factional interests and a strong sense of personal involvement.

GREEK HISTORIANS AT THE END OF THE REPUBLIC

With the progressive collapse of the Seleucid regime in Syria well under way by the end of the second century, and the Attalid kingdom ending in 133, many sources of royal patronage in the east had vanished. As that happened, the flow of intellectuals to Rome increased while, at the same time, new opportunities and standards of cultural achievement at Rome sent ever more Romans scurrying to acquire a fresh coat of cultural polish in the eastern Mediterranean.[1]

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[1] Liv Mariah Yarrow, *Historiography at the End of the Republic: Provincial Perspectives on Roman Rule* (Oxford, 2006), 11–16, 25–30; and for handling of fragmentary material on which so much of what follows is based, see Peter A. Brunt, 'On Historical Fragments and Epitomes', *Classical Quarterly*, 30 (1980), 477–94. This article is dedicated to my teacher and friend, Nick Stylianou, who introduced me to the joys of Diodorus some three decades ago, and has remained a touchstone of sanity and profound learning ever since.

At the same time, as the Roman practice of history became more sophisticated—the annalistic tradition finally emerged in the second half of the second century—the notion that there were other histories that could teach the aspiring 'mover-and-shaker' at Rome what he needed to know about the world appears to have become more potent.

Mutual interest dictated the development of ever closer links between members of the aristocracy at Rome and the learned community of Greeks. Thus Posidonius (the most famous eastern historian of the first half of the first century BC) was drawn into the debate about whether the Junii Bruti of the Late Republic could really claim descent from the Republic's founder, given the fact that they were plebeians (Fr. 256), and received Gnaeus Pompey more than once on Rhodes (T. 35–9). The desire of the educated Roman to be commemorated by a Greek intellectual is plain, not simply from Cicero's desire that Posidonius transform the account that he had written of his consulship in Greek into a piece of full-blown Posidonian historical rhetoric, but by the fact that a man like Lucullus would patronize a poet like Archias, who composed poems celebrating his eastern campaigns, or that Theophanes of Mytilene, one of Pompey's closest friends, would write about him in Greek.[2] One of the remarkable conceits of Dionysius' *Antiquities of the Romans*, written in the time of Augustus, is the implicit definition of a person as Greek if he speaks the language, observes the customs of Greeks, acknowledges the gods, lives according to equitable laws, and has other habits of life that agree with them (D. H. *Ant.* 1. 89.4).[3] To some degree this definition also held good for Romans while forging a common identity for themselves with the newly enfranchised Italians in the generations after the Social War. The rise of the Rome-based Greek historian should perhaps also be seen as a function of the birth of a new, more open, imperial society shaped by the horrific experiences of the civil wars that engulfed the Mediterranean world. The victors in these struggles depended upon talented outsiders as much as they did on their fellow Romans; it is in the company of men such as Sulla, Pompey, and Caesar that we see provincials rising to positions of great influence as both cultural and political agents. The leaders of Roman society wished not only to be powerful, but also to be seen as powerful. Unofficial versions of royal courts developed around them, replete with military specialists ranging from Publius Ventidius, the former prisoner of war who served as Caesar's chief of staff, or Balbus, the Spanish aristocrat who acted often as Caesar's factotum, to Gnaeus Pompeius, a man who had either himself or through his father received the citizenship through the agency of Pompey, who served as a translator for Caesar in Gaul. To be important one also had to appear sophisticated—to have an interest in literature and the arts. One needed to know Greek well, and to be known in the Greek world. It is for this reason that the work of successful Greek

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[2] *FGrH* 186, 188.
[3] Emma Dench, *Romulus' Asylum: Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian* (Oxford, 2005), 234–8.

intellectuals is representative of dialogues about culture and history that were an implicit feature of late-republican and Augustan society.[4] In this new world, aspiring Roman oligarchs needed just what the Greek intellectual could help him attain, and that was 'a thorough knowledge of the many customs of the barbarians and Greeks, to hear about various laws and forms of government, the lives of their men and their exploits, their deaths and their fortunes' (D. H. *Pomp.* 6 tr. Usher).

One of the keys to the new cultural dialogues was to find a way of fitting Roman history into Greek, and this required the development of chronological systems that allowed events in the east to be synchronized with those in the west. The practice clearly began quite early as Polybius knew a tradition according to which the Gallic sack of Rome was in the same year as the Peace of Antalcidas in 388/7 (Pol. 1.6.2), while Fabius Pictor had placed the election of the first Plebeian consul in the twenty-second year after the Gallic sack (*FRH* Fr. 23). Thus it was that, by the time of Cicero, the business of synchronism was well established, and some basic principles emerge from a long list of synchronisms that Aulus Gellius appears to have derived from Cornelius Nepos (although he alleges it stems from his own broad reading). Among these are that the expulsion of the kings should be roughly contemporary with the expulsion of the Pisistratids from Athens, that the battle of Marathon occurred somewhere in the vicinity of the two-hundred and sixtieth year from the founding of Rome, that the Peloponnesian War broke out when Olus Postumius Tubertus was dictator, and so forth (AG *NA* 17.21.8–17). The further importance of this list is that it reveals the way history was quite literally coming together around the synchronisms computed from the founding of the city. The problem was that this was all very approximate, and the devilish details became a great deal more complicated when people tried to unite a synchronistic list with a list of Roman magistrates. The reason that this was a problem was that the list of magistrates for the fourth and fifth centuries was too short to match up with basic synchronisms based on dates from the foundation of the city by five pairs of consuls, and this was so even though it was believed by some that the list had been artificially enhanced through the addition of fraudulent pairs.[5] The situation was further

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[4] For this point (made explicitly, and debated explicitly) with reference to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, but extensible to others, see Glen W. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek East* (Oxford, 1965), 123–5, 130–2; and Nino Luraghi, 'Dionysius von Halicarnassus zwischen Griechen und Römer', in U. Eigler, Ulrich Gotter, Nino Luraghi, and Uwe Walter (eds.), *Formen römischer Geschichtsschreibung von den Anfängen bis Livius* (Darmstadt, 2003), (2003), 283–5. For the view that the primary audience of Dionysius was Greek (a point also extensible to others discussed here) see Emilio Gabba, *Dionysius and the History of Archaic Rome* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1991), 80; and Matthew Fox, 'History and Rhetoric in Dionysius of Halicarnassus', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 83 (1993), 34.

[5] Plut. *Numa* 1.2; Cic. *Brutus* 62; Livy 8.40. 4–5 with Bruce W. Frier, *Libri Annales Pontificum Maximorum: the Origins of the Annalistic Tradition* (rev. edn, Ann Arbor, 1999), 121–4. Katherine Clarke, *Making Time for the Past: Local History and the Polis* (Oxford, 2008) offers a useful overview of the development of Greek chronographic writing but does not examine the issues raised here.

complicated by the fact that there was disagreement on the date of the city's foundation, and by the fact that some of the pioneers of the art of synchronization had not been internally consistent.[6] Every historian seems to have had his own way to solve these problems, and continued to do so even after Augustus sanctified the list proposed by Cicero's friend Atticus in his *liber annalis* (a list of magistrates) of 47—it created one year without magistrates and added four years in which only a dictator was elected—by using it as the basis for the Capitoline Fasti. Neither Livy nor Dionysius of Halicarnassus used Atticus' system and, in point of fact, no system could have special standing since there was no mechanism in Rome by which 'official status' could be conferred on anything. Some would prove better at finding a path through the morass, others worse; the earliest person whose efforts have come down to us at some length is Diodorus Siculus.

We do not know when Diodorus began his project, or when exactly he finished it—he was in Alexandria in 60/59 when a Roman ambassador killed a cat (Diod 1.44.1, 83.8, 17.52), moved to Rome and says that he worked on the history for thirty years (Diod 1.4.1). These thirty years do not seem to have begun before the end of the fifties since he would presumably not have decided to end with Caesar's invasion of Britain if he was not confident of the outcome of the civil war. His pro-Caesarian sentiments also emerge from his positive record of Caesar's deification, and his statement that the expulsion of the inhabitants of Tauromenium when Augustus installed a veteran colony in 36 BC, made the city a more famous place (Diod. 40.7.3, 16.7.1).[7] Aside from suppositions based on these comments, nothing can be said about Diodorus' place in the ancient world.

In dealing with the mass of history prior to the emergence of Rome as a world power at the end of the third century (from roughly 200 onwards he uses Polybius and Posidonius as his main sources), Diodorus appears to have aimed to present readers with the 'Classics'. Thus it is that Diodorus' sponge-like absorption of the language of his predecessors and careless summaries of their work mean that the *Library* preserves an enormous amount of material that would otherwise be lost.[8] Without Diodorus we would have little sense of the development of Greek historical writing after Thucydides, we would know little of Ephorus, we would be largely dependent upon Demosthenes for knowledge of the career of Philip II, and we would not have an important alternative to Arrian's narrative of Alexander. We would know virtually nothing, aside from what could be gleaned from Plutarch's lives of Demetrius and Pyrrhus, about the events between the death of Alexander and the battle of Ipsus in 301 BC. It is to

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[6] For internal inconsistencies in *ab urbe condita* dates by second century annalists, see Frier, *Libri Annales Pontificum Maximorum*, 144.

[7] Eduard Schwartz, *Griechischer Geschichtschreiber* (Leipzig, 1957), 35, correcting the date of the colony at Tauromenium with Brunt, *Italian Manpower 225 B.C.–A.D. 14* (Oxford, 1971), 237.

[8] Panico J. Stylianou, *A Historical Commentary on Diodorus Book 15* (Oxford, 1998), 132–9.

Diodorus that we owe the bulk of our knowledge of Hecataeus of Abdera's account of Egypt, almost all of our knowledge of the classical history of Sicily, insight into Philinus of Agrigentum's account of the First Punic War, and thus into what Polybius did with this history. The subsequent books on the war with Hannibal reveal the hands of historians whose views likewise stem from the pre-Polybian era in historiography. Although he does not say so explicitly in the extant section of his work, it appears that the themes that Diodorus used to link all this together were those of virtue, fortune, and the fate of empire.[9]

In dealing with the Roman component of his history, Diodorus began, as expected, with chronology, and as also would have been expected, he tried to work this out on his own, which is too bad.[10] The task required the reconciliation of different strands of evidence in ways that could challenge a talented scholar. Diodorus was not talented, and his solutions were lacking in eloquence and accuracy. He doubled up the magistrates for 391/90–387/6 (the same magistrates are used 386/5–382/1), and added a year of anarchy in 367/6 (15.75.1). When it came to linking the events that he found in histories of early Rome with his scheme, idiosyncrasy abounds. He put things in an order that other people working with the same material did not, and there is no evident rhythm or reason to his choices as compared to theirs.[11] It is only when Rome becomes the primary focus of the history (and someone else had done the basic work of synchronization) that things become better, though it is fair to say that they do become a good deal better. Diodorus' account of events in Italy surrounding the Social War and the Sullan regime suggests that he was closely attuned to the discourse of the age, as he was when he later quoted a letter from Pompey on his eastern campaigns, and produced a dramatic version of Cicero's first Catilinarian oration that even Cicero might have enjoyed (Diod. 40.4–5a).[12] That said, it may not have been for their own history that Romans came to Diodorus. Rather it may have been for his succinct handling of Greek mythology. There are at least two sections of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* where it is arguable that the poet is actually citing the historian.[13]

Posidonius of Apamea, the last of Diodorus' classics, was born around 135 and died towards the end of the fifties (possibly in 51) BC. His histories, which began where Polybius ended, in 146 BC, filled fifty-one books and came to an end in the mid-eighties, possibly with the Peace of Dardanus. This would mean that he covered little more than a single year in each book, while the book numbers attached

⁹ Kenneth Sacks, *Diodorus Siculus and the First Century* (Princeton, 1990), 23–54.
¹⁰ Gerhard Perl, *Kritische Untersuchungen zu Diodors römischer Jahrzählung* (Berlin, 1957), 142–7.
¹¹ Ibid., 125–9.
¹² Stephen Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy Books VI–X*, vol. 1. (Oxford, 1997), 104–8.
¹³ See Ovid *Met.* 12.211 with Diod. 4.69–70; and *Met.* 10.13 with Diod. 4.25.4. I am indebted to my colleague Professor J. D. Reed for these points.

to some of the quotations of his work (always in Athenaeus' *Diepnosophista*e) suggest that he worked region by region, giving a narrative of several years in each before moving on. Thus book four seems to include material from the 140s and 90s in Syria, book seven treats the 140s in Egypt, and book twenty-six describes doings in Babylonia during the 120s.[14]

The surviving fragments of Posidonius' history reveal an eye for the absurd, a fascination with the habits of foreign peoples, contempt for rulers who governed for their own pleasure, hatred of cruelty, a passionate sense of justice, and a delight in animals. From Athenaeus, we learn that Posidonius said that Ptolemy VII was enormously fat and wore long-sleeved ankle-length tunics, and that Ptolemy Alexander I was such a slave to luxury that he was unable to relieve himself unless supported by servants, but that at drinking parties he would dance barefoot with the best dancers (Fr. 58, 77). We also learn that the scientist who discussed the nature of earthquakes, the eruption of an undersea volcano near the Lipari archipelago, and reported the body of a dead monster on the Macra plain, used his historical work to comment upon the large insular rabbits in the Bay of Naples (Fr. 227, 230, 244, 52). Posidonius' interest in the world outside the realm of Greek kings and Roman magistrates led him to investigate the customs of the Celts and Germans. He also recorded the story that when the Parthian king, Arsaces, captured Antiochus VII Sidetes, Arsaces told him that his boldness and drunkenness caused his fall for he expected to drink the Parthian realm out of large cups (Fr. 63). What we cannot know is whether Posidonius recorded the luxurious living of the Greek cities in Syria—to which the excesses of Antiochus contributed—to prove that their moral corruption left them vulnerable to barbarian attack (Fr. 61a–62a, 54).[15] Diodorus suggests that Posidonius blamed slave owners in Sicily for the terrible slave revolt that broke out in 134/3, intimated that the inherently noble Celtiberian peoples of Spain would sacrifice their all for liberty, as at Numantia, and gave Gaius Gracchus low marks for turning the people of Asia over to equestrian *publicani*.[16] Plutarch says that Posidonius met Marius at the end of his life when he was overwhelmed by anxiety that led to alcoholism (Fr. 255). That is not to say that everything Roman is evil. Posidonius has much good to say about Fabius Maximus and Marcellus, heroes of the Second Punic War (Fr. 258–60). Indeed, Posidonius seems to have felt that the traditional aristocracy was responsible for the greatness of Rome, and that men who pandered to the masses caused problems. To judge from his account of the revolt of Athens against Rome in 88, he had no confidence in the wisdom of democratic assemblies to do better. People were

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[14] Katherine Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (Oxford, 1999), 166–7, 346.

[15] Yarrow, *Historiography at the End of the Republic*, 308–9.

[16] Diod. 5.34. 1; 34/5. 1–2; 25 with Hermann Strasburger, 'Posidonius on the Problems of the Roman Empire', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 55 (1965), 47–8.

easily deceived by Athenion—the philosopher-king in reverse—whose brutality ruined the city well before Sulla arrived (Fr. 253).[17] Although conscious of issues of class and class struggle, Posidonius seems consistently to have sided with the winners, arguing that the poor, if well governed, would be happy and that it was the duty of the governing class to provide exactly this leadership. Such sentiments earned Posidonius his welcome into the company of Cicero.[18]

A different approach to the history of the world was manifest in the work of Posidonius' younger contemporary, Alexander of Miletus, known as Polyhistor. Enslaved by Cornelius Lentulus in 82, Alexander was freed by Sulla, and continued to live in Rome, writing all the time in Greek, while also offering instruction to the 'students of Crates'—people who sought to apply the critical methods of the famous philosopher, Crates of Mallus, who had astonished the Romans with his learning in the middle of the previous century (*FGrH* 273 T. 1). His massive output included five books on the history of Rome (which was evidently differentiated from that of Italy), along with books on many other regions of the eastern Mediterranean, tracing a circle from the Adriatic to North Africa.[19] Moving beyond the Mediterranean rim, he also discussed the history of Mesopotamia and then that of India. Implicit in his work—and the exclusion of Celtic zones—is that the people about whom he wrote had reason to be interested in each other.

The next generation would see two more distinctive responses to the project of universal history, by Timagenes of Alexandria and Nicolaus of Damascus, who wrote at enormous length. Timagenes seems to have stressed that, although the Greek kingdoms of the post-Alexandrine world had fallen to Rome, there were other lands out there that could resist. He eschewed homage to Polybius and ranged across all of human history. He also seems to have had a powerful disposition that enabled him to thrive in the face of adversity. The son of an Alexandrian banker, he was taken to Rome by Gabinius in 55 and freed by Faustus Sulla, though not before spending some time as a slave—serving successively as a cook and then, allegedly, as a litter-bearer. Once freed, he made a reputation as a sophist in the entourage of Pompey, and later befriended Antony (Plut. *Ant.* 72.2). Occupying a significant position amongst Greek intellectuals at Rome in the years after the assassination of Caesar, he championed Atticism in public debates with the rhetor Craton before Augustus. In the course of these displays he so insulted the aspiring *princeps* and his wife that Augustus banned him from his house and ordered his histories burnt 'as if he could cut him off from his own genius' (Sen. *Contr.* 10.5.22). He could not, and Timagenes went to live in the house of Pollio. We do not know exactly when he wrote *Concerning*

[17] Yarrow, *Historiography at the End of the Republic*, 288–9.
[18] Christopher Pelling, 'The Greek Historians of Rome', in John Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (Oxford, 2007), 252.
[19] Schwartz *Griechischer Geschichtschreiber* (1957), 241–4; *FGrH* 273 F. 20, 70.

the Kings, as his universal history was called, but it does not seem to have struck Roman readers in later generations as obnoxious. Quintilian praised him for having restored the reputation of historical writing after a long period in which it had fallen into disrepute, and Ammianus Marcellinus quoted his views on various people with approval.

Timagenes' project differed from that of Diodorus, in terms of his talent and ambition; it is telling that Diodorus essentially wrote a book about books, while Timagenes' book was about political power. His younger contemporary, Nicolaus of Damascus also had a life of varied experience before he began his project once he came to Rome in the years after Actium (and possibly at the same time that he wrote a biography of Augustus).[20] He had previously been tutor to the children of Antony and Cleopatra.[21] His *Universal History* in 144 books was the grandest product of the age. Beginning with Semiramis and offering much detail on the demise of Sardanapalus, he placed the early history of the east firmly before that of Greece (*FGrH* 90 Fr 1–2). He did not reach the generation of the Argonauts and Hercules before the beginning of his third book (*FGrH* 90 F. 7). Lydian history begins to be linked with Greek in the sixth book (*FGrH* 90 F. 48), and Cyrus appears in the seventh, the last book for which we have an extensive summary in the ninth-century extracts from ancient historians assembled under the aegis of the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus in the tenth century—especially those volumes *On Virtues* and *On Plots.* From the fragments recovered elsewhere we can see that Nicolaus reached Sulla in book 78 and concluded with the victory of Augustus in books 123 and 124 (*FGrH* 90 Fr. 81). Much of the later content of his history, which may have focused quite heavily on the doings of his patron, Herod the Great, would seem to inform Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews,* though Strabo does quote him for the auto-immolation of the Indian ambassador, whom he says that he met in Antioch in 20 BC, and Plutarch for details on the suicide of Brutus' wife, Porcia (*FGrH* 90 Fr. 99, 100). In the minds of contemporaries, his work dwarfed that of rivals both in quantity, and to judge from the fact that he had more readers in later generation, quite possibly in quality. These rivals included Strabo of Amasia, who evidently completed his forty-seven-book continuation of Polybius while Nicolaus was still at work.[22] Strabo, who could count amongst his maternal ancestors a Mithridatic governor of Colchis, and the Dorilaus who betrayed fifteen garrisons to Lucullus, was perhaps the most aristocratic of the universal historians in the Augustan age (*Geog.* 12.3.33).[23]

Although universal history seems to have been the high-profile project of the day, there were other authors who attempted less grandiose themes. Not

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[20] Usefully assembled with translation and commentary in Jane Bellamore, *Nicolaus of Damascus: Life of Augustus* (Bristol, 1984).
[21] Yarrow, *Historiography at the End of the Republic*, 67–77, on his career.
[22] *FGrH* 91 with Clarke, *Between Geography and History*, 154–85, 346–73.   [23] Ibid., 234.

surprisingly, the Mithridatic wars attracted attention from a number of authors, while Philip, son of Aristides from Pergamon, Asinius Pollio of Tralles (presumably a freedman of the famous senator), and Socrates of Rhodes wrote on the subject of the Roman civil wars.[24] Memnon of Heraclea Pontica wrote a history of the travails of his city in the era of Mithridates, while Empylos of Rhodes, whom Cicero seems to have thought highly of as a rhetorician, wrote a work on the death of Caesar (dedicated to Brutus), and Potamon of Miletus wrote encomia of both Caesar and Brutus (one would like to know in what order).[25] The most successful of such people in literary terms—Theophanes of Mytilene was the big winner on the political stage—was Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who wrote on Archaic Rome. Dionysius' twenty books on the *Antiquities of the Romans* open before Romulus and end with the outbreak of the first Punic War. Unlike Posidonius, Timagenes, and Nicolaus, who all mingled with the great and famous of their age, Dionysius seems to have contented himself with addresses to members of the lesser nobility whom he did not know well.[26]

In imagining history, Dionysius identified the fourth-century writer, Theopompus, as the ideal historian who could write on a significant theme while illuminating character so that he showed:

the ability, in the case of every action, not only to see and to state what is obvious to most people, but to examine even the hidden reasons for actions and the motives of their agents, and the feelings in their hearts (which most people do not find easy to discern), and to reveal all the mysteries of apparent virtue and undetected vice.

(D. H. *Pomp.* 6 tr. Usher)

It is rare, however, that Dionysius' own practice achieves the high standard to which he aspired. Although he was more successful than Diodorus in his handling of Roman chronology and could justify his choice to assign the first year of the Republic to the first year of the 68th Olympiad rather than to the third year of the 67th (the year chosen by Varro),[27] and succeeded in unearthing some important material—perhaps nothing more significant than the account of Aristodemus of Cumae, a contemporary of Tarquin—he tended to favour

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[24] For the Mithridatic wars, see *FGrH* 184, 187, 187a, 274, 190 (to judge from the nature of the citations). For the civil wars see Angelos Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften: epigraphische Beiträge zur griechischen Historiographie* (Stuttgart, 1988), 314–7; *FGrH* 193 (Pollio); and 192 (Socrates).

[25] For Heracleides, see *FGrH* 434 with discussion in Yarrow, *Historiography at the End of the Republic*, 138–45, showing how he belongs in this context. For the others see *FGrH* 191, 147 (Potamon, was also a well-known rhetor, and wrote a history of Alexander).

[26] Pompeius Geminus (*PIR*² P 610), the recipient of the *Letter to Pompeius*, is otherwise unknown, though possibly an ancestor of *PIR*² P 610, a *septimvir epulonum* under Domitian; Aelius Tubero (*PIR*² A 274), recipient of the *Concerning Thucydides* was the father of the consul of 11 BC and himself the author of a history of Rome from the regal period, see *FRH* 18.

[27] D. H. *Ant.* 1.74.6, 5.1 with Clemence Schultze, 'Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Roman Chronology', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 41(1995), 192–214.

display of his own rhetorical skills over more succinct forms of analysis. He also seems to misunderstand much of his source material in quite fundamental ways. Thus he shows that he does not know the difference between the *comitia curiata* and the *concilium plebis* (D. H. *Ant.* 9.41.2), and appears to be confused about the nature of the *senatus consultum.* At one point he seems to treat them as having the force of law (D. H. *Ant.* 9.37.2); in other places he confuses them with the archaic custom of the *auctoritas patrum*, which he sees as being granted before laws were passed even in the earliest Republic (D. H. *Ant.* 9. 41.2–3, 44.7, 49.4, 10.4.1). The *auctoritas patrum* in the earliest Republic was a measure by the senate affirming the legality of actions taken by the *comitia* after those actions were taken, until 339 when it was transferred to the period before the vote.[28] A further problem is that for Dionysius, linguistic theory—he was a champion of the Atticist movement in Greek literature—was more important than accuracy. Thus he refers to actions of the senate as *probouleumata*, suggesting that he saw the senate acting as a city council in Greece; hence also his persistent use of Boule for the senate. He also offers the archaic word *asymnetes* for dictator, and *trittys* for the Latin *tribus*—in the one case he wished to indicate that dictators arose from a constitutional process, unlike *tyrannides*, and in the other he was respecting the derivation of the Latin word.[29] In the case of the immensely long treatment of Coriolanus—nearly 20 per cent of the entire work—it is possible to argue that his decision to include many long speeches represents his view that Romans could solve their problems through debate. It is also possible to suggest that Dionysius has elevated a minor episode (probably fictional) well beyond any reasonable estimate of its importance to the Roman tradition (D. H. *Ant.* 7.16–63, 8.1–62).

Even if one does not take a positive view of Dionysius' achievement in the *Antiquities*, there can be no doubt but that it was influential, and that his vision of Roman history resonated better with later audiences than did that of the universal historians. By arguing that Romans were really Greeks, and that their success could be understood through the study of their customs without reference to the failures of foreign peoples, Dionysius pointed to the future of Greek treatments of Roman history. What is more, by imitating the focus of the annalistic tradition on Rome itself, albeit with a universalizing introduction that fitted the scheme of the 'succession of kingdoms', he showed how to integrate the distant past of a single state into a broader cultural framework.[30] The method may have drawn strength from the centuries-old use of mythological diplomacy

[28] Schwartz, *Griechischer Geschichtschreiber*, 327–9.

[29] Hugh J. Mason, 'Roman Government in Greek Sources: the Effect of Literary Theory on the Translation of Official Titles', *Phoenix*, 24 (1970), 153, 155.

[30] Gabba, *Dionysius and the History of Archaic Rome*, 192–3, though the framework was somewhat more flexible than he allows; see David S. Potter, *Prophets and Emperors: Human and Divine Authority from Augustus to Theodosius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), 186–8.

to assert connections between states throughout the Mediterranean.[31] It bore fruit in a very different history composed by a very different sort of author at the end of the first century AD. The author was Flavius Josephus; his history, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, traced the history of his people from the creation of the world to the reign of Nero.

THE FLAVIANS AND ANTONINES

The multifaceted contribution of Josephus, and his manipulation of tradition to explain provincial politics that had no grounding whatsoever in the Classical Greek past represent the flexibility of tradition once it was no longer grounded in ethnicity.[32] It is interesting as well that Josephus, who lived in Rome as he wrote and surely could have learned Latin well enough to compose in the language of Vespasian if he chose, may have selected Greek because that was the language in which provincials described themselves to Romans. In making the choice of language that he did, Josephus might also have looked to the career of a man who gained Augustus' favour even though his personal connection to Augustus' enemies was unsurpassed. This was Juba, the son of a pro-Pompeian king whom Caesar crushed, who was married to Cleopatra Selene, daughter of Antony and Cleopatra (*FGrH* 275). Raised in Rome, there can be no doubt that Juba was raised to speak Latin, but he chose to compose his voluminous works in Greek once he was given Mauretania to rule for himself.[33] It is perhaps also telling that he based so much of his narrative of the rise of the Herodian regime on Nicolaus of Damascus, another man who had moved between two worlds.

In the generation after Josephus, another man who had spent extensive time in Rome, and also knew Latin (although he deprecates his achievement), produced a massive *oeuvre* in Greek. This man was Plutarch of Chaeronea, whose *Lives of the Famous Greeks and Romans* offered a new take on what was by then an old practice of linking Greek history with Roman, showing that the two might be read as mirror images of each other, thereby offering original insights into the way that Rome could be perceived, and the ways that Romans might perceive themselves.[34] There is perhaps no more remarkable fact than, in Plutarch's view, that a man did not have to be an emperor to be compared with a king,

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[31] Olivier Curty, *Les parentés légendaires entre cités grecques: Catalogue raisonné des inscriptions contenant le terme syngeneia et analyse critique* (Geneva, 1995) for epigraphic evidence; and Christopher P. Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999) for the broader context.

[32] On this point, see Dench, *Romulus' Asylum*, 344–61. For more on Josephus see Jonathan Price in this volume.

[33] See now Duane W. Roller, *The World of Juba II and Kleopatra Selene: Royal Scholarship on Rome's African Frontier* (London, 2003).

[34] Tim Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford, 1999), 288.

unless it is that there are two biographies after that of Caesar in the chronological scheme of the *Lives*, and that Plutarch wrote a separate work on the lives of the Caesars. This not only makes Augustus the first emperor; it makes Antony and Brutus the last of the republicans—hardly a ringing endorsement of that system of government. As if to drive home that point, neither Brutus nor Antony is paired with an especially admirable Greek: Antony's partner is the degenerate adventurer, Demetrius; Brutus is linked with a conservative Syracusan foe of tyranny who died 'quivering' at the hands, of political rivals. On the issue of regal comparison, Demetrius, obviously, was a king, and that is not inappropriate to the ambitions of Antony, but elsewhere the Gracchi are paired with Agis and Cleomenes, the revolutionary Spartan kings of the later third century; Marius is paired with Pyrrhus; and Pompey with Agesilaus. Was Plutarch trying to make a point? Was this point that Caesar and Augustus were not the first Romans with regal pretension? If that is so then Plutarch's understanding of Roman history would not differ radically from that of Tacitus, who asserted that there was no obvious break point between the politicians of the first half of the first century and the emperors who followed them. When he composed his collective biography of the Caesars from Augustus to Vitellius, Plutarch reinforced his point about Caesar's generation as one of transition.[35] Even though he might criticize Caesar for his excessive ambition, he had no sympathy for obstinate foes such as Cato or the assassins, and in fact states that Fortune determined that Brutus would fail, stating that:

since, as it would seem, the government of Rome could no longer be a democracy, and a monarchy was necessary, Heaven, wishing to remove from the scene the only man who stood in the way of him who was able to be sole master, cut off from Brutus the knowledge of that good fortune, although it very nearly reached him in time.

(*Brut.* 47 tr. Perrin)[36]

Plutarch's image of himself as the informed teacher mediating between two worlds, as well as between the past and present, is ably maintained in his books of *Roman Questions* and *Greek Questions*, pairing a set of answers about largely religious institutions of the Romans with questions about specific institutions of Greek states. It is also maintained by statements about the difficulty that he had with Latin (as if he needed to read the texts on his own—a highly unlikely circumstance) and the importance of maintaining himself at Chaeronea, which needed prominent men like himself to stay put. Still, in conception, the *Parallel Lives* look not to Greek models so much as to Roman: the closest parallel to what Plutarch did may have been Cornelius Nepos' *Lives of Illustrious Men*, and the recipient of the work was Sosius Senecio, a close friend of Trajan and one of the most important Romans of his generation.[37] Plutarch might tend to Hellenize Roman politics, and view the politics of the Roman Republic through

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[35] For the full range of Plutarch's biographies, see Konrad Ziegler, *RE* 21 col. 697–8, 895–7.
[36] Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 79–80, 148–9.   [37] Ibid., 290–1.

the lens of Greek theory—once again equating the senate with a civic *boule* and persistently misreading the struggles of the Late Republic as being between aristocrats and 'commoners'—but he never oversimplifies the complexity of the relationship between the two peoples.[38]

Plutarch's self-presentation should not occlude the fact that history in Greek was no longer restricted to Greeks, nor even outsiders such as Josephus. Gaius Sulpicius Galba, father of the future emperor, and descendant of a family that prided itself upon its pedigree, wrote a synchronous history of Greece and Rome that went down at least as far as the age of Sulla (*FGrH* 92 T 1, F 2). As the second century progressed, and as we know of no prose historian in Latin who wrote contemporary history after Tacitus, and only two who wrote about the Republic, there appears a plethora of persons with positions within the imperial bureaucracy who wrote in Greek. In some cases these are natives of the east, and of these, the greatest was perhaps Arrian, friend of Hadrian and consul (probably in 129), who is our primary source for both Alexander the Great and the philosophy of Epictetus. He also reported to Hadrian on his tour of the Black Sea as governor of Pontus, and wrote on tactics—both theoretically and in practice—on horsemanship and hunting. His first major work after his record of the discourses of Epictetus was probably the *Parthian War* (inspired by that of Trajan, but treating earlier material as well), while his other works included a history of his homeland—Bithynia—and of the successors of Alexander. Slightly younger than Arrian was a lawyer from Alexandria named Appian, who appears to have turned to history in the reign of Antoninus Pius.

Little is known of Appian other than that he barely escaped with his life during the Jewish revolt in Egypt in 117 AD (he was assisted by avian prognostication), and that he became a representative of the *fiscus* and was offered the rank of procurator, which he declined on the grounds of his advanced years. He was a friend of Fronto, the tutor of Marcus Aurelius, who was instrumental in the offer of the honorary procuratorship, and was resident in Rome for much of his adult life. It is from Fronto that we learn that he had no children in old age.[39] It is from Appian himself that we learn that he originally intended his historical work to consist of twenty-two books, describing the rise of Rome from the Regal period to the Principate of Augustus in the first twenty-one, and the state of the empire in the twenty-second. In the course of writing, the plan appears to have changed, as he refers to a book on the Parthian wars, and one on Dacian wars is quoted by Zonaras as being the twenty-third in his history. Photius says that there was a twenty-fourth concerned with the Arabs. A passage in the account of the *Illyrian Wars*, taken again with Photius, suggests that the once-intended

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[38] On Plutarch's handling of Roman politics, see Christopher Pelling, 'Plutarch on Roman Politics', in I. S. Moxon, J. D. Smart, and A. J. Woodman (eds.), *Past Perspectives: Studies in Greek and Roman Historical Writing* (Cambridge, 1986), 159–87.

[39] Front. *Ad Ant.* 9; *Ad. Ep.* 4–5 (Van den Hout).

book twenty-one on the organization of the empire became instead an account of the wars waged by emperors in the years prior to the reign of Trajan.[40] The work as a whole allowed one book each to the wars of the regal period, central Italian wars, the Samnite wars, wars against the Celts, Sicily, and the islands, Spanish wars, the war with Hannibal, wars in Africa, the Macedonian wars, wars in Greece and Ionia, wars in Syria, and the Mithridatic wars. These were followed by five books on the civil wars, and four books on the war that ended at Actium (called by Photius the final four books of the civil wars). In composing his history of earlier Rome, Appian shows considerable independence, and a taste for pre-Livian annalists. Thus he cites Cassius Hemina for Fabius Dorsuo's sacrifice in the temple of Vesta during the Gallic occupation of the city, and in his account of Scipio's campaign in North Africa gives information about a captured Carthaginian general that accords with Coelius Antipater and Valerius Antias. In another place his information about the identity of a Carthaginian general in Spain corresponds with authors called 'other' by Livy, in contradiction to Valerius.[41] In several places in the account of Scipio's Spanish campaign he agrees with Polybius, while his account of the First Punic War and of Philip V's treaty with Hannibal are plainly from very different Roman traditions.[42] The question of his sources becomes more vexed as Appian himself becomes a chief source for our knowledge of events, as in the case of the Mithridatic wars, and the opening of the civil strife at Rome.

Howsoever one might resolve individual source problems, it does seem clear that Appian was very well versed in the Latin historiographic tradition. This command of the Latin tradition was linked with an Atticizing tendency to replace words in common usage with obscurationist archaism. In the case of Appian, *harmost* is used for *triumvir rei publicae constituendae*, *proboulos* interchangeably with *bouleutês* for senator, and *taxiarchos* for the commander of a legion.[43] In all of this, the posture that he adopts is as an outsider who has become an insider and will now explain the world to those he left behind. Despite the posture, his residence in Rome suggests that his immediate audience was in the capital, and this might have included men like his friend Fronto. It might also have included men like Phlegon of Tralles, the freedman of Hadrian, who produced, amongst other works, a detailed synchronous chronicle (*FGrH* 257, 257a); Chryseros, a freedman of Marcus Aurelius who wrote what appears also to have been a chronicle on the history of Rome from the foundation of the city

[40] App. *Syr.* 260; *BC* 2.18 (Parthian history); Fr. 18 Trajan's Dacian war in his twenty-third book; see also Schwartz, *Griechischer Geschichtschreiber*, 362.

[41] App. Celt. 6=Cassius Hemina Fr. 22 Beck and Walter; Lib. 14=Coelius Antipater Fr. 49 Beck and Walter; Valerius Antias Fr. 28; *Ib.* 74 contra Valerius Antias Fr. 25.

[42] App. *Ib* 13=Pol. 3.33; 30= Pol. 11.24a4, though in both cases the same information is in Livy; on the first Punic war, see *Sic.* 1–2; on the treaty with Philip, see *Mac.* 1; and, in general, Schwartz, *Griechischer Geschichtschreiber*, 363–75.

[43] Mason, 'Roman Government in Greek Sources', 154, 156–7.

to Marcus' death (*FGrH* 96); or Claudius Charax of Pergamon, who was consul in 147 AD.[44]

THE THIRD CENTURY

Appian died in the reign of Antoninus Pius. Cassius Dio, who would compose an eighty-book history of Rome in his own old age, was born at the beginning of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, probably in 164.[45] His father, Cassius Aproni-anus, was consul either towards the end of Marcus' reign or in the very beginning of that of Commodus, governing both Lycia and then Cilicia (Dio 69.1.3, 72.7.2). His homeland was Nicaea, but it is likely that he acquired the land around Capua where Dio seems regularly to have dwelt when he was not in Rome.[46] Dio's own career included a praetorship in 195 and consulship around 205. He was curator of Pergamon and Smyrna, and governor of Africa, Dalmatia, and Upper Pannonia under Elagabalus and Severus Alexander, before holding a second consulship in 229 (Dio 49.36.4).

Dio's first historical work, written about the time of his praetorship, was on the dreams and portents that had encouraged Septimius Severus to seize power. He wrote a second work on the civil wars in which Severus came to power. Upon receiving a letter thanking him for the work from Severus himself, he fell asleep and dreamed that *to daimonion*—the divine force which he saw as guiding fate—urged him to write the history of Rome, down at least until the end of Severus' reign. According to Dio:

I decided not to leave that work on its own, but rather to incorporate it into this history, so that all would be part of one history from the beginning until that point at which it seemed to Fortune that I should stop writing. I have dedicated myself completely to this goddess and take her to be the guide of my life, this goddess who encourages me to write this history when I am timid and shrink from it, and when I am weary and would abandon it, she draws me back through dreams, and she gives me good hope for the future that my history will remain and be not at all obscure. I gathered the material from the foundation of Rome to the death of Severus in ten years, and spent another twelve years writing. Subsequent events will be recorded to whatsoever point is granted me.   (Dio 72.23.3–4)

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[44] *FGrH* 103; Chaniotis, *Historie und Historiker in den griechischen Inschriften*, 318–20 with Alain M. Gowing, *The Triumviral Narratives of Appian and Cassius Dio* (Ann Arbor, 1992), 285–7.

[45] For a general survey, extending well beyond the narrative historians dealt with here, see Harry Sidebottom, 'Severan Historiography: Evidence, Patterns and Arguments', in S. Swain, S. Harrison, and Ja Elsner (eds.), *Severan Culture* (Cambridge, 2007), 52–82.

[46] Anna Maria Andermahr, *Totus in praediis: Senatorischer Grundbesitz in Italien in der frühen und hohen Kaiserzeit* (Bonn, 1998), 210.

Although there is some doubt as to what this actually means—presumably the work on the victory of Severus was not presented to him until some point at which that victory was secure and he was back in Rome (hence, most likely, 202)—it seems that Dio finished research around 212, and the writing of the first part of his history by 224, at which point, influenced by yet another dream, this one of Severus himself, he wrote about the reigns of Caracalla, Macrinus, and Elagabalus (Dio 79.10.1–2). A brief conclusion leaves readers in the late 220s with Alexander Severus on the throne and trouble brewing with the new Sasanian regime in Persia.[47] The twelve-year period of writing saw the completion of a draft of the whole history, followed by a period of constant revision—there are moments of personal intervention which reflect autopsy in the course of his career at places like Thapsus (Dio 43.7.2), the entrance to the underworld at Hierapolis (Dio 68.27.2–3), or Trajan's bridge over the Danube (Dio 68.13.1–6).

Dio worked on, and wrote, his history while he lived in Italy. His primary audience comprised members of his own class, whose experiences he continuously recalls.[48] He remembers the special moment when he saw the aged son-in-law of Marcus Aurelius, Clodius Pompeianus, enter the senate in 193 after the murder of Commodus, and that Pompeianus had refused to attend the *ludi Romani* the year before when Commodus appeared as a gladiator and *venator*. Dio reminds his readers how he himself had saved many by chewing on his laurel crown, showing others how they could avoid being seen to laugh at the emperor as he waved the head from a decapitated ostrich at them (Dio 74.3.2–4, 73.21.1–2). He learned, in Cilicia, about the flight of Sextus Quintilius Condianus, victim of Perennis' purge under Commodus, and writes of the oracle that warned Quintilius of impending doom (Dio 73.6.1–5). He is outraged when Macrinus does not observe what he regards as the rules of the senate (Dio 79.22.3), and cared deeply about Domitius Florus who was deprived of his aedileship because of his friendship with Plautianus after the fall of the latter in 205. He had to wait twelve years for his next office (Dio 79.22.2).[49]

The events of Dio's lifetime appear as a memoir of the governing class, written in the knowledge that information was very hard to come by, that emperors kept the truth to themselves, and that the very size of the empire made it difficult to learn what was going on (Dio 53.19, 72.18). In dealing with information he said that: 'For it seems to me to be especially instructive in this matter, whenever one takes deeds at the basis of reasoning, investigating the former with the latter, and proving reasoning true through correspondence with the facts' (Dio 46.35.1).

For the earlier history of Rome, in the Republic, Dio plainly used a variety of sources, all in Latin. Cicero's speech to the senate in 43 draws upon the *Philippics*, as does his speech after the death of Caesar, the story of Cinna's plot

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[47] Timothy D. Barnes, 'The Composition of Cassius Dio's Roman History', *Phoenix*, 38 (1984), 247.
[48] Gowing, *The Triumviral Narratives of Appian and Cassius Dio*, 292–3.
[49] Sir Fergus Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (Oxford, 1964), 171–3.

under Augustus derives from Seneca, and he knew a wide range of republican annalists, and enough details about the life and works of Sallust to contrast the man's conduct with his published views on morality.[50] In one place he can be seen to be agreeing with a tradition known to Appian against Livy, in another with Livy against Claudius Quadrigarius, and there are a number of places where traditions derived from Coelius Antipater rear their heads.[51] His interest in the pre-Livian annalists places him in the same intellectual world as Fronto and Aulus Gellius, who likewise exalted the virtues of pre-Augustan authors. It also suggests that, had he chosen to do so, Cassius Dio's Latin was probably more than adequate to allow him to write in Latin—a language in which he functioned on most days of his adult life.

What Dio desired above all else was an imperial system where people like himself enjoyed the honour that they felt they deserved. Although he respected Severus, Dio also feared him. He was horrified by the speech that he gave to the Senate praising the wisdom of Sulla, and plainly remembered the day that he joined his fellow senators feeling for the hair on their head when told that a bald member of their order was linked to Apronianus, a former governor of Asia who was tried for treason on the grounds that his maid had dreamed that he would be emperor and that he had cast spells to ensure this outcome (Dio 76.8, 77.8). He thought that this sort of thing should not happen, which is why he has Caesar himself answer Severus in a long speech in book forty-six. It may also be why he asserted that the monarchy began with Actium, and records in detail the way that Augustus, as victor in the civil war, treated the traditional offices of the Republic with respect.[52] Were it not for the interest taken by Dio in the constitutional aspects of the age of Augustus these would now be lost; they did not attract the attention of Velleius Paterculus, and they did not intrigue Suetonius. Obviously they did interest a later historian of the Julio-Claudian era who, like Tacitus, may have turned a bemused eye upon the altering definitions of *imperium*. For Dio, however, the actions of Augustus were a model for later rulers. It is in this spirit that he composed the great debate between Maecenas and Agrippa over the way the state should be won and placed it in the fifty-second book, just after Actium and before the post-war settlements at Rome. Likewise, as the centrepiece of his history, the tale of Augustus may be seen as being framed between two speeches: the one being Tiberius' immense funeral oration at the end of book 56, which summarizes the forgoing pentad; the other, book 44, which is entirely devoted to Caesar's assassination and the immediate aftermath.[53] In that book, Cicero, in whom Dio had already expressed considerable interest as a man whose

[50] For Cicero and Seneca, see ibid., 54, 78; and for Sallust, see Dio 43.9.3.
[51] Schwartz, *Griechischer Geschichtschreiber*, 408–9.
[52] On the authorship of this speech, see Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio*, 80; for the Augustan era, see Gowing, *The Triumviral Narratives of Appian and Cassius Dio*, 21–8; and Peter Michael Swan, *The Augustan Succession* (Oxford, 2004), 13–17.
[53] Ibid., 325.

weakness undermined his purpose, almost brought peace.[54] Agreement is reached between the followers of Caesar and the assassins after Cicero's disquisition on the evils of civil war, only to be overthrown by Antony in his funeral oration for Caesar, praising the virtues of the deceased, while using his corpse as a tool for his own ambitions (Dio 44.35, 52–3).

Dio saw the time of Marcus Aurelius as one in which men like himself were treated with respect, while he saw his own time as an age of rust and iron (Dio 72.36). It is unfortunate that we are unable to compare his opinions in detail with those of his other senatorial contemporaries, with the exception of Marius Maximus, who wrote also in the time of Alexander Severus and seems to have hated many of the same people Dio did (Marius wrote imperial biographies in Latin after the fashion of Suetonius that are the foundation of the later *Historia Augusta*'s lives from Hadrian to Macrinus). Other works and authors are, to us now, merely names. These include Asinius Quadratus, who wrote a history of Rome from the foundation of the city to the reign of Alexander Severus in fifteen books, entitled *The Thousand Years.* His time frame would be roughly identical to that of Dio's history, but it is highly unlikely that *The Thousand Years* was a history of Dio's sort. It is much too short, and may have been a chronicle like that of Cassius Longinus, who covered 228 Olympiads in eighteen books that ended in the time of Commodus.[55] We are left then simply with the knowledge that he mentioned some Italian cities, that he continued to be read into the sixth century, and that he wrote a book on the Parthian Wars.[56] More popular, perhaps, in those days were collective biographies such as those that Marius wrote, or Philostratus' account of rhetoricians, archly constructed in the next decade as a history of culture, to praise emperors who paid attention to the achievements of men like Philostratus himself. More popular too might have been shorter works like the one that Dio wrote for Severus, or the endless effusions on Lucius Verus' Persian war that Lucian pilloried in his *How to Write History.* One such work seems to underlie Dio's account of Marcus' German wars, replete with documents such as treaties that refute Dio's claim that Marcus aimed to create a new province north of the Danube. Herodian refers to 'many others' who wrote about Severus' wars, and Philostratus even cites one: a man named Antipater of Hierapolis.[57] It is those works that may also raise a question about the choice that Dio made of language. Well read in Latin, he chose to write for his Italian audience in Greek, expecting that they would pick up on his invention of a Thucydidean style naval engagement, as well the insertion of a Thucydidean dialogue into the narrative while, at the same time, making it clear that he knew that *optimates* and *populares* were aristocrats using different styles of argument, and that *senatus consulta* were not the same as *proboleumata.* Was that an abnormal

[54] Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio*, 46–55.   [55] *FGrH* 259.
[56] *FGrH* 97 with *PIR*² A1244–6.   [57] Herod. 2.15.4.5; Phil. *VS* 2.24; *FGrH* 211.

decision? Quite possibly not. To write about emperors was to comment upon what emperors wrote about themselves—both Severus and Caracalla produced memoirs—and in writing about wars it was expected that attention would be paid to the laurelled missives that emperors dispatched on the theme of their glory. As early as the reign of Trajan, when Pliny decided to spare the world his own effort at contemporary history, he wrote to a friend named Caninius Rufus who had written a Greek epic poem about the Dacian wars.[58] Pliny, of course, did treat his contemporaries to his massively enhanced panegyric on Trajan. Was that increasingly the choice? In writing history, was it wiser to write in Greek because then one would not risk appearing to compete with the emperor? Antonine authors seem to have come to equate history with accounts of warfare, so perhaps this was a natural development.[59]

Dio's history offers itself as a statement for his class—his friends are Italian as well as Greek—and that is what history had traditionally been at Rome. Dio would be the last senator to set his hand to such a task, and the historians who follow in the course of the third century are also radically different from those who had written in the first century as participants in the culture of the Roman elite. Men such as Herodian, whose eight books on the history of Rome from the death of Marcus Aurelius to the beginning of the sole reign of Gordian III, were not senior officials. Herodian has no identifiable friends, no identifiable homeland, and few identifiable sources of information. For some events, where it may be presumed that he was present, he seems to have been a keen observer. This is especially true of his narratives of the reign of Elagabalus and of the year 238, though even here the extreme focus on Rome occludes events in provinces whose governors chose to join against Maximinus, and he neglects events such as the Sasanian takeover of the Severan province of Mesopotamia, which would have become even more important, as Gordian III died in a campaign that began with the recapture of those provinces and ended with the accession of Philip, in whose reign it may be reasonably presumed that Herodian composed. In other cases his narratives are vastly more eccentric. Some are based on pictures, and some based on sources that are beyond reconstruction (and, as in the case of the tale of the fall of Perennis, fictional). Still, his work represents the sort of 'creative' historiography that plainly had an audience in the Roman world, reflecting spectacle while aiming to entertain rather than instruct. Herodian also stands at the beginning of a significant break point in the history of the Roman aristocracy. In the age of Severus Alexander, senators expected to have significant careers in imperial service throughout their thirties and forties. A generation later this was no longer the case. The court had become more mobile, and senatorial status was no longer required to become an emperor.

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[58] Plin. *Ep.* 8.4.
[59] On war as the subject of Antonine history, see Adam Kemezis, 'Lucian, Fronto, and the Absence of Contemporary Historiography under the Antonines', *American Journal of Philology*, 131 (2010).

The decline in the political importance of the senate during the mid third century may explain why senators cannot be found writing histories of Rome. What it cannot explain is why the slack should have been taken up by the intellectual heirs of Herodian—outsiders who stayed put in the provinces (as far as we can tell) and wrote about the history of the empire. This seems a genuine change in taste, for while we have ample evidence for the practice of local history throughout the east, and of its practical importance for urban self-fashioning from the time of Alexander the Great onwards, the shift to imperial historiography seems to accompany the fact that imperial history itself was landing in the laps of local worthies in ways that it had not for centuries. This was a direct consequence of the failures of the 250s, when the Roman state suffered a series of catastrophic defeats. First, the emperor Decius was killed in battle with raiders from north of the Danube in 251, then the Persians sacked Antioch in 252, other raiders burst out of the Black Sea to burn Ephesus in 253, and, to cap it all, the emperor Valerian was captured by the Persians in 260, at which point the empire effectively split into three parts: one controlled by a breakaway regime in Gaul, another, consisting of Italy, Africa, Egypt, and the Balkans under Valerian's son, Gallienus, while the eastern provinces were controlled (albeit in alliance with Gallienus) by a warrior named Odaenathus from the city of Palmyra in the Syrian desert. This division lasted for more than a decade until Aurelian, who took the throne in 270, was able to reassert control first over the eastern provinces— which had rejected Roman control after power had passed, at Rome, to Claudius II in 268 and, in the same year, to Zenobia, the widow of Odaenathus in Syria—and then the Gallic provinces, before his own assassination in 275.

It is in this context, in the 260s, that we find Nicostratus of Trebizond writing a history from Gordian III (killed in a mutiny after losing a battle against the Persians in 244) to the victory of Odaenathus, while Philostratus of Athens seems to have written a quite detailed account of the wars of the same period.[60] A man named Eusebius wrote a history from Augustus to Carus (the emperor who was murdered by his men while invading Persia in 283) that is known for an extensive discussion of the siege of Thessalonika.[61] The astute Callinicus of Petra wrote a famous panegyric on Gallienus, a history of Alexandria for Zenobia, a history of the restoration of the Roman Empire for Aurelian, and dedicated a work on rhetoric to Virius Lupus, one of the few senators to be a man of genuine influence in those years.[62]

The best known provincial historian of the third century is the Athenian, P. Herennius Dexippus, a man of distinction in his home city. His two major

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[60] *FGrH* 98, 99 with David S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1990), 361 on Philostratus in particular.

[61] *FGrH* 101.

[62] *FGrH* 281 T 1 with *Men Rhet.* 370.14–15 on the panegyric on Gallienus; and Michel Christol, *Essai sur l'évolution des carrières sénatoriales dans la seconde moitié du IIIe siècle ap. J.C.* (Paris, 1986), 263–70 on Lupus.

works (aside from a history of the successors to Alexander the Great) were a chronicle of world history and a history of the contemporary wars with the Goths (whom he called the Scythians). It is just possible, on the basis of the fragments of this second work, to glean something of his working method and theme. The key is offered by two long passages describing embassies to Aurelian (*FGrH* 100 F 6–7).[63] The heading in the *Excerpts Concerning Embassies from Foreign Peoples to the Romans*, which preserves them, says that they are from book 3.[64] Other volumes of *Excerpts* quote earlier parts of the work at some length, showing that the earlier books had survived into the tenth century and were replete with cities captured by barbarians. That there are no quotations from these same books in the *Excerpts Concerning Embassies from Foreign Peoples to the Romans* suggests that there were no extensive accounts of embassies to quote.[65] On the basis of the distribution of fragments it is possible to reconstruct a history that began with crises, moved through sundry disasters, and ended with Aurelian's re-establishment of the proper relationship between Rome and the barbarians. In this regard, the *Scythian History* appears to participate in the message projected by Aurelian himself, that victory brought with it the restoration of peace, and that Rome's enemies were not just to be defeated on the battlefield, but brought back into a proper relationship with the state.[66] There is much in this work that is poor history, but at least Dexippus seems to have had a point that he wanted to make after years in which he had seen his life thoroughly disrupted and his own city sacked by invading Goths. In so doing he used the traditions of Greek rhetoric to underscore the distinctions between the civilization of the empire, represented by the emperors, and the barbarism of their opponents.[67] That is more than can be said for Herodian. Indeed the historians of the later third century, with their evident desire to reflect imperial propaganda, also reflect a closeness to the imperial government that may be a direct result of the increased imperial presence in the provinces. In terms of the development of historical practice, it will be clear that, by the beginning of the second century, interest in comparative chronography had ceased to be significant for narrative historians, even though the practice had remained vigorous as a genre on its own, and had, already, before the death of Cassius Dio, attracted its first significant Christian practitioner in Sextus Julius Africanus. In the case of Dexippus, it appears that there was little interpenetration between his personae

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[63] For general studies, see Gunther Martin, *Dexipp von Athen: Edition, Übersetzung und begleitende Studien* (Tübingen, 2006) (the most thorough reassessment with a new edition of the fragments. I retain Jacoby's in this article for the sake of consistency, but Martin's is now the best).

[64] *FGrH* 100 F 6.?

[65] For the working methods of the excerptors, see David S. Potter, *Literary Texts and the Roman Historian* (London, 1999), 73; and Martin, *Dexipp von Athen*, 42–56 (the best study of Dexippus' preservation).

[66] Anne Daguet, 'L. Domitius Aurelianus perpetuus imperator', *Antiquités africaines*, 28 (1992), 174 n. 6.

[67] Martin, *Dexipp von Athen*, 37–41, 208–9, 251–2 (on the use of Thucydides to this end).

as a chronographer and as a narrative historian. The spare (and seemingly accurate) entries in the surviving fragments of the Chronology are strikingly different from the overblown rhetoric of the *Scythian History.*

THE FOURTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES

The stabilization of imperial government under Diocletian, his colleagues, and immediate successors did not inspire a rash of critical historians to emerge from the palace woodwork. For the reign of Constantine we have, for instance, amongst non-Christians only Praxagoras of Athens, and it is quite likely that he provided the information about Constantine's wars with Licinius that makes its way through Zosimus from Eunapius' history, written in two editions at the end of the century.[68] Praxagoras' history ended, as does Zosimus' coherent narrative of Constatine, with Licinius' surrender in 324. The absence of other material upon which later writers could draw may be indirectly attested by the fact that when Church historians of the early fifth century sought information about Constantine, they perforce had to turn to Eunapius who would, it may be surmised, have been unpalatable and, consequently, unread if other options had been available.

Eunapius was notoriously anti-Christian and a strong partisan of people who subscribed to his particular stripe of Neoplatonic philosophy.[69] His decision to begin. His history where Dexippus' *Chronicle* left off suggests that he perceived the paucity of reasonable sources for the history of the previous century and a half. His treatment of the third century is spotty at best; for instance, the long description of the siege of Cremna in Cilicia, which is now supported by evidence from excavation which proves that there was an actual siege of the place under Probus, contrasts starkly with the non-narrative that he offers of the revolt of Carus in which Probus died.[70] It is really only with the reign of Constantius II that Eunapius finds his own voice, and for his knowledge of the period he relied heavily on personal contacts, the most important of whom was the doctor Oribasius, who gave him invaluable information on Julian's final campaign, probably for the second edition of his history.[71] It is history from a very personal perspective, and that was increasingly the tenor of the time. Indeed, it is this feature

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[68] *FGrH* 219 with Rowland Smith, 'A Lost Historian of Alexander "Descended from Alexander", and Read by Julian? Praxagoras of Athens Reviewed in the Light of Attic Epigraphy', *Historia*, 56 (2007), 356–80; and Pawel Janiszewski, *The Missing Link: Greek Pagan Historiography in the Second Half of the Third Century and in the Fourth Century AD* (Warsaw, 2006), 352–71.

[69] Roger C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, 2 vols. (Liverpool, 1981, 1983), i. 1–26 for a summary of issues; and ibid., ii for the fragments.

[70] Eunap. Fr. 1; Zos 1.69–70 with Stephen Mitchell, *Cremna in Pisidia: An Ancient City in Peace and in War* (London, 1995); contrast Zos. 1. 81.4–5 in terms of coverage.

[71] John F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (rev. edn, Ann Arbor, 2007), 164.
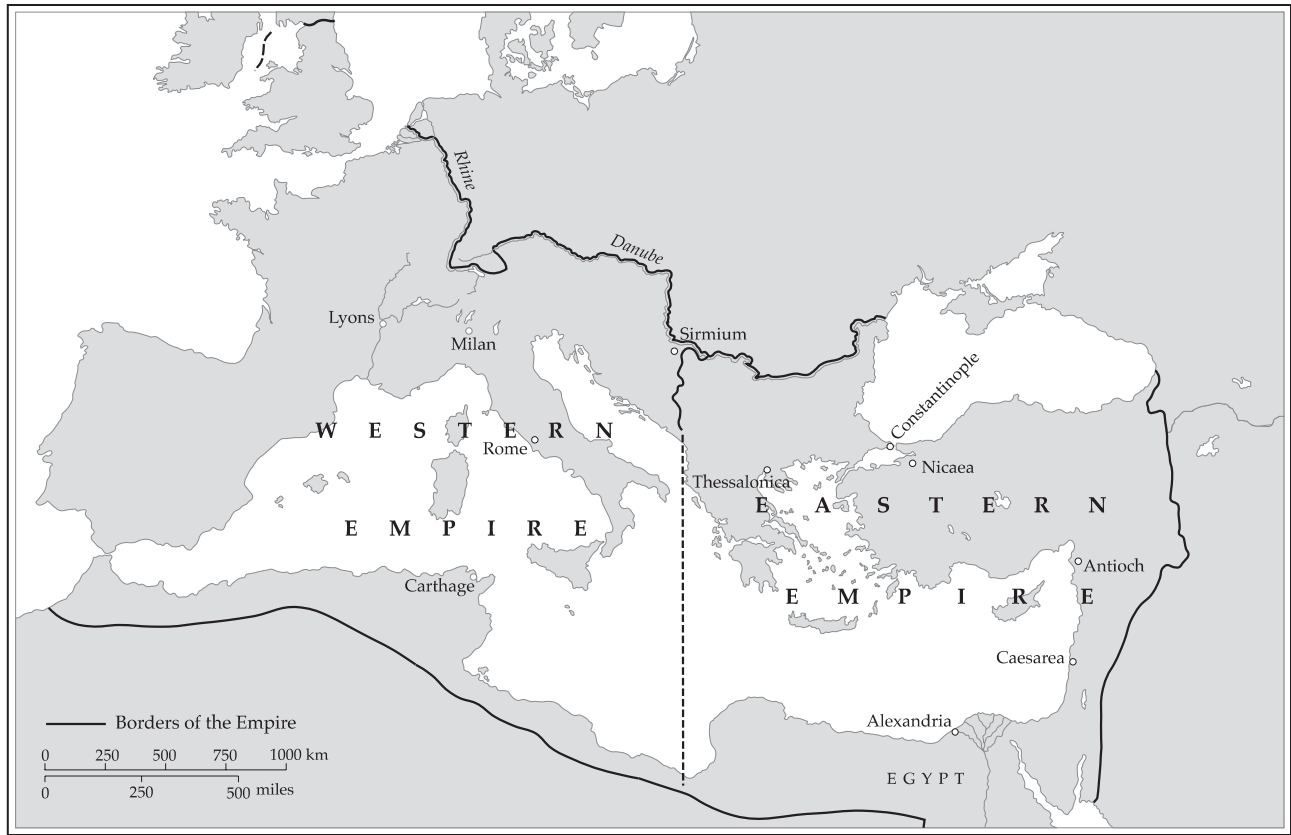
Roman Empire AD 395.

more than anything else that he shares with Ammianus Marcellinus, a Greek historian in spirit, whose thirty-one-book history from the reign of Nerva to the death of Valens would prove to be the last great narrative written in Latin.[72] Ammianus offers vivid detail of his participation in the events that he describes and a passionate feel for the issues of the day. A more tolerant and well-travelled soul than Eunapius, his ostensible hope for the empire's recovery from the disasters of the 370s was not, as he well knew, fully born out in the decades of civil war and concession under the sons of Valentinian in the west and Theodosius I in the east.

As the fifth century began, the redefinition of imperial history as memoir and *parti pris* discourse that it had taken under Eunapius and Ammianus is especially pronounced in the works of Olympiodorus of Thebes and Priscus of Panium. Olympiodorus was a major actor in his age, playing some role in the overthrow of John and the installation of Valentinian III on the western throne in 425.[73] We do not know exactly when he completed his twenty-two-book history, which he said was not intended to be a 'history' so much as a memoir offering material for the use of others (T 1 Blockley). From Photius' summary, as well as the extensive quotation of his work in Zosimus and a number of ecclesiastical historians, it appears that Olympiodorus disliked sea travel, was sympathetic to the Visigoths, and had a long-term relationship with a parrot. The first of these qualities is often attested, the third but once when he says that his parrot was 20 years old, and the second may reflect the view of Galla Placidia, the sister of Honorius, whom he served in 425.[74] Galla had once been married to the Visigothic king Athaulf, to whom she bore a short-lived son, and whom she seems to have liked a good deal better than her second husband, Constantius III, whom she was forced to marry, and to whom she bore two children. Olympiodorus, although critical of her on occasion, appears to have been more sympathetic to her cause than to that of other leaders in western society. One person that Olympiodorus certainly did not like was Honorius, whom he appears to have blamed for the political failures of the early fifth century. He devoted the first ten books of his history to the events of 407–412, and mostly to events in the west, though in the tenth book he also offered a long description of the embassy upon which he discussed archery with Donatus, a leader of the Huns and, evidently, participated in his assassination, escaping with his life only when Charaton, 'the first of the kings', accepted a massive gift (Fr. 19 Blockley).

One of the most obvious aspects of Olympiodorus' career is his interest in the efficacy of statues, and in imperial bureaucrats whom he thought did their best.

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[72] Ibid., remains crucial.

[73] Ibid.; and Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*, i. 27–47.

[74] On the first two points, see Fr. 28 and 35; Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*, i; for the third see ibid., i. 46; and Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford, 2006), 226.

He describes how a statue erected near Mount Aetna to control the lava flow was moved so that it faced the straights of Messena, and thereby prevented Alaric from crossing (Fr. 16 Blockley). He knows of two statues, buried in the ground, that seem to have protected Illyricum from danger, and seems to have thought that Galla Placidia was wrong to insist on the death of the magician Libanius (Fr. 27, 36 Blockley). He appears to have been sympathetic to Stilicho, first regent then victim of Honorius, and certainly felt that Boniface, the powerful general of his own time, was a good man (Fr. 3, 38, 40 Blockley). He also appreciated the actions of a woman named Spadusa (if that is the correct name) and Elpidia, Placidia's nurse, in making sure that she did not have an affair with Honorius (Fr. 38 Blockley). If there is a message that comes through more clearly than any other from the surviving text, it is that people like Olympiodorus could save the empire from people like Honorius if they had a chance. One wonders what Theodosius II thought of the work, which was dedicated to him.

The last of the great Greek historians of the period prior to the fall of the western empire was Priscus of Panium, and he seems to have felt that the western empire was a drag upon the east, where he served. Priscus' history in eight books covered the period from (probably) 434 to (most likely) 474. Its later readers refer to it as a *History of Byzantium and the events concerning Attila*, or a 'Gothic History', though probably neither of these titles goes back to the author.[75] Both titles do, however, reflect what the fragments also reveal, and that is that Priscus was primarily concerned with Rome's dealings with the peoples of, or originally from, the areas north of the Danube. Like Olympiodorus, Priscus was a man of action and strong opinions. The longest surviving section of his history is the narrative of an embassy that he accompanied to the court of Attila in 449. It was not without incident, and it seems quite likely that the ambassadors were told to pay off a minister who had agreed to kill Attila (the person in question then revealed details of the plot to Attila).[76] Indeed, the perilous embassy seems to have been almost a required experience for the bureaucratic historians of this age. One of the most striking passages of Ammianus' history records his trip with the *magister equitum*, Ursicinus, in 355 to murder the rebellious *magister militum*, Silvanus, on the Rhine. Ammianus also provides stunning personal details of his flight to Amida and the siege of that city in 359, and the progressive degeneration of Julian's invasion of Persia in 363. Did survivorship now lend authority? One great difference, however, between Ammianus' view, and indeed that of Olympiodorus and Priscus, is that Priscus seems to regard the western regime as a nuisance. He refers to members of an embassy from Aetius that was at the court of Attila when he was there as being from 'the western Romans', and throughout

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[75]	Priscus T 1 with Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*, i. 49.
[76]	Priscus F. 11.2 with discussion in Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 313–24; and James J. O'Donnell, *The Ruin of the Roman Empire* (New York, 2008), 93–4.

refers to the western portion of the empire as a separate realm (Fr. 11.2.345, 20). While Ammianus and Olympiodorus both end their histories with the imperial regime under siege, they both appear to expect it to recover. Priscus has no such illusion.

The Greek historians of Rome were not, by and large, seeking a mass audience. They were seeking to write for men of influence, and in so doing they tended to reflect the developing interests of the imperial governing class. It was their aim to enable their audience to better understand the nature of power, and the best modes of government. The movement in their subject matter from universal history to the imperial governing class's relationship to the emperors, to the history of particular groups within government, well represents the development of Roman imperial government over the centuries. Powerful senators of the Late Republic saw the acquisition of empire as a desirable thing in their struggles with one another for power within the state. Members of Cassius Dio's generation took the imperial regime for granted, though they plainly desired that it function in their own best interests. They represent what was, in their view, the value system of the empire as a whole. The historians of the fifth century, whether the secular figures treated here, or the Christian historians treated elsewhere in this volume, are very much the creatures of faction, defining positive and negative exempla in terms of their own particular interests. In their concentration on the history of their own times and groups, Olympiodorus and Priscus present a vision of the future. They see the failures of western regimes, and the problems inherent in trying to bring order in areas where barbarian successor states have already emerged, while the emperors in Constantinople are faced with many problems of their own. Well before Zeno decided to leave Italy to Odovacer, a former servant of the failed regime of the Huns, Priscus made it clear that this is what should happen. In many ways the development in the themes of history is as it should have been. If they are to survive, historians must keep the interests of their readers at heart.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

44 BC   Assassination of Julius Caesar; Octavian adopted as Caesar's heir
31 BC   Battle of Actium
AD 14   Death of Augustus
AD 68   Death of Nero, end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty
AD 69   Year of the Four Emperors; Vespasian emerges victorious, establishes Flavian dynasty
AD 96   Assassination of Domitian; accession of Nerva, end of the Flavian dynasty
AD 98   Death of Nerva; accession of Trajan
AD 117   Death of Trajan; accession of Hadrian

AD 138   Death of Hadrian; accession of Antoninus Pius
AD 161   Death of Antoninus Pius; accession of Marcus Aurelius
AD 180   Death of Marcus Aurelius; accession of Commodus
AD 192   Murder of Commodus (December 31)
AD 193   Septimius Severus seizes power at Rome
AD 211   Death of Septimius Severus
AD 235   Death of Severus Alexander, end of Severan dynasty
AD 306   Constantine seizes power in Britain
AD 337   Death of Constantine
AD 395   Death of Theodosius I; accession of Honorius and Arcadius
AD 410   Goths under Alaric sack Rome
AD 476   Traditional date for the end of imperial control in the western empire

KEY HISTORICAL SOURCES

Appian, *History of the Wars* (Regal Period to *c.* AD 98).
Cassius Dio, *History of Rome* (foundation of the city to *c.* AD 230).
P. Herennius Dexippus, *Scythian History* (*c.* AD 238–272); *Chronicle* (Earliest Times to 270 AD).
Diodorus Siculus, *Universal History* (prehistory to 60 BC).
Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquities of the Romans* (Prior to the Foundation of Rome–264 BC).
Olympiodorus of Thebes (History of Rome 407–25).
Priscus of Panium (History of Rome 434–74).

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ADDENDUM

While this chapter was in press, a crucial new piece of evidence appeared with the publication of P. Oxy. 4940, which has plausibly been identified as a fragment of Timagenes. The surviving lines, which deal with Gabinius' attack on Alexandria, have a distinctly pro-Catonian slant.

Chapter 14

Imperial Christian Historiography

Michael Whitby

Christianity began as a faith whose primary direction was forwards as adherents looked for the Second Coming which Christ's words in Matthew 16.28 (also Mark 9.1; Luke 9.27) had suggested was imminent. The main relevance of the past, as recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, was to provide the prophecies and other foreshadowings of the Messiah's actions so that his status was thereby corroborated. As the years passed and contemporaries of Jesus grew older, while the Second Coming was still delayed, it became increasingly important to record the teachings and deeds of the Messiah before all those with direct experience had died. As a result, the Gospel narratives were produced along with the Acts of the Apostles between the Crucifixion and the journey of Paul to Rome in the early 60s AD.

Thereafter there is a break in what can broadly be regarded as Christian historiographical activity, since there could be no certainty about the preservation of an entity such as the Church which might have a history to be recorded and passed down. The diffusion of Christian communities, however, did create a need to commemorate and communicate the struggles of successive champions of the faith, with the result that, from the mid second century, various martyrdoms are described in letters: thus the Church at Smyrna wrote to the Church at Philomelium to recount the triumph of Polycarp (Stevenson, *New Eusebius* 20), while the churches at Lyons and Vienne wrote to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia to describe their martyrs (Eusebius, *HE* 5.1.3–63). Each community also needed its own record, which might take the more rhetorically amplified form of these letters, or the much sparser account of the Scillitan martyrs (Acts 86–9). As churches developed their calendars of commemorative feasts, so they needed to compile information to educate congregations in what was being celebrated.

Doctrine was another stimulus, since a church which had been challenged by a particular problem would want to inform others of the developments, perhaps to save their colleagues the trouble of devising their own response to a common issue, but more importantly to ensure that their own view remained the dominant one by preventing the competition from building support for divergent positions. Thus Eusebius quotes from an anonymous writer against the

Montanists, who addressed a letter or book to Aviricius Marcellus in which the doctrines and fate of these heretics are recorded (*HE* 5.17).

Another stimulus to what in retrospect can be seen as the foundations for Christian historiography came from the need to define the position of the Church viz-à-viz both the Jews and the traditional majority in terms of pedigree and antiquity, thereby defending from the accusation of novelty and innovation a religion whose origin could, to most observers, be fixed at a certain historical point when Christ began his ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius (Luke 3.1). The relationship with the Jews was easier to negotiate, since Christ's status as the physical completion of the various Old Testament Messianic prophecies and his statement that his new covenant had replaced that of Moses, justified the annexation by the Church of the whole of Jewish history. This then provided a basis for locating the Church within the framework of world history, since the interaction of the Jews with the Persians contained various chronological links into existing Greek computations: the liberation of the Jews from captivity after Cyrus the Persian had defeated the Babylonians (Ezra 1.1–4), since Cyrus' accession had been established as the first year of the fifty-fifth Olympiad (217 years after the first Olympiad), with the defeat of Babylon following twenty-two years later, or the reconstruction of the Jerusalem Temple in the second year of Darius (Ezra 4.24), the first year of the sixty-fifth Olympiad. From one of these synchronisms it was possible to push back through the generations of the Old Testament to propose dates for Abraham and even beyond. As a result, the interconnections between Jewish and Greek history were already clearly mapped, and the priority, for example, of Moses over Plato and even Homer was established.[1]

The principles of adapting these demonstrations to Christian purposes had already been outlined in the West by Tertullian (*Apol.* 19.1–8) and in the East by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* 1.2 ff.), but the key individual in this Christian annexation of the historical traditions of other nations was Julius Africanus. Although his work does not survive, sufficient extracts and other information are preserved, primarily in the early ninth-century *Chronographia* of George Syncellus, to reconstruct his approach: part of George's project was to overhaul the calculations of Julius, correcting them where necessary but also defending them to an extent from some of the criticisms of Eusebius.[2]

For Julius, history was providential, and so the duty of the historian was to reconstruct the divine arrangement which both controlled events in the past and determined what was to come. In the scheme of Julius, God's Creation of the world in the six days of Genesis determined the shape of subsequent history,

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[1] See, for example, Josephus, *Contra Apionem*. For a brief survey of these developments, see Brian Croke, *Christian Chronicles and Byzantine History 5th–6th Centuries* (Aldershot, 1992), ch. 3.

[2] See the clear discussion in William Adler and Paul Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation* (Oxford, 2002).

since a thousand years were as a day in the sight of the Lord (Ps. 90.4). On this basis the world could be predicted to have a lifespan from the moment of the Creation of 6,000 years, which would be followed by a further millennium of rest in the same way as God had rested on the seventh day of Creation. Julius proceeded to apply this grand structure with great symmetry. Christ was born in the Year of Creation, *annus mundi*, 5,500, exactly halfway through the world's last millennium; 25 March was identified as the day both of his Incarnation (hence birth on 25 December) and the Crucifixion, while these crucial dates for the salvation of humanity coincided with that of the original Creation of the world in 5,500 BC at the spring equinox (by the Julian calendar). Certain cross-checks could be extracted from Scripture: thus the death of the patriarch Phalek, whose Hebrew name Peleg meant 'division', naturally occurred at the halfway stage of history; namely, the year 3,000 (Africanus *ap.* Syncellus 97). Greater ingenuity underlies the exploitation of the 969 years of Methusaleh. By adding his life to the thirty-one years of Christ's ministry, Julius completed a millennium, while Methusaleh's status as the eighth patriarch could be linked to Christ's Resurrection on the first day after the Jewish Sabbath; that is, an eighth day. Granted the standard millennial interpretation of seven days, the number 8 could be linked to the 'supramundane eighth day, the Lord's day', the new timeless age that was to follow the seven millennial weeks of human history and the Second Coming of Christ which was guaranteed by the Resurrection: 'for what he is lacking, the Saviour completed in order to fulfil the millennium, the primary and complete period of time' (Africanus *ap.* Syncellus 21).[3]

The complexity of this precise project is evident even from its fragmentary remnants, and it is not surprising that Julius made some errors. The most striking is that he assumed Cyrus' decree to liberate the Jews coincided with his accession to power in Persia (560 BC), rather than followed his conquest of Babylon (538 BC) which brought the Jewish community under his authority, so that a gap of twenty-two years opened up in his calculations. The vagueness of some of the Scriptural chronological markers—for example, the lack of information about the times of the forefathers of Moses or the rule of the judges of Israel—also gave ample scope for alternative interpretations. Above all, Julius, though providing the basis for a complete integration of the different historical traditions of the ancient world, did not pursue this aspect to its obvious conclusion and construct a universal account. He confirmed the antiquity of Christian tradition by demonstrating that Moses was contemporary with the Attic Ogygus and the Argive Inachus, but did not attempt to synchronize earlier events. Although this could be justified with regard to Greek traditions because of their confusion and contradictions (Julius *ap.* Eusebius, *PE* 10.10.1), his dismissal as mere boasting of the Babylonian and Egyptian traditions, of which he knew through Berossus

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[3] Ibid., 28 n. 2, with p. xxxi.

and Manetho, evaded the challenge of harmonizing these chronologies with the Old Testament. Neither did he carry through a detailed integration of post-Olympiad Greek or Roman history into his scriptural framework—a task which would have been relatively easy on the basis of existing world histories. Instead, in keeping with his location of Christ at the centre of his project, he used the angel Gabriel's exposition to Daniel of Jeremiah's prophecy about the seventy weeks of Jewish history (Dan. 9.24–7) to bridge the gap between the reign of Artaxerxes and Christ's Resurrection, even though on his calculation the period was only 475 years instead of the requisite 490—a problem which he tentatively resolved by proposing that the prophecy was calculated in Jewish lunar years.[4]

A different approach to the issues of the antiquity and validity of Christianity is evident in Lactantius, the North African teacher of rhetoric who converted to Christianity in the late third century. The *Divine Institutes*, composed during the Great Persecution and with only limited updating thereafter, is a complex attempt to justify Christianity to non-believers. One strand of the argument is to challenge the accusation of novelty by arguing that it is the Olympian deities who are the relatively recent introductions through the Euhemerist approach of insisting on their human origins; classic critiques of traditional beliefs, such as Cicero's *de Natura Deorum*, provide much material. Another strand is to demonstrate that Christ was the fulfilment of prophecy, but in Lactantius the chosen prophets are not the expected Old Testament ones since they could be dismissed as biased. Rather, the testimonies are drawn from outside the Judaeo-Christian tradition, to demonstrate how complete unbelievers, especially those of considerable antiquity such as the Sibyls and Orpheus, had foretold the life of Christ, with Scripture being adduced on occasion as confirmation of this external evidence: for example, 'Holy Writ says the same' caps the evidence of Cicero and the Sibyl that God made man (*DI* 2.11.15–18). As a result, it should in theory be much harder for opponents of the Church to dismiss the testimony as irrelevant, although Lactantius will have known that some of his authorities, such as the Sibylline texts, were subject to challenge. The link between the earliest phases of the traditional classical world and Christ also contributed to Lactantius' main project of charting the trajectory of Justice from the Golden Age of Saturn, in which many of the predictions of Christ were generated, through the Age of Jupiter, during which Rome grew from nothing to a world power, whose might alone was delaying the cataclysmic end of world history and collapse of human society after 6,000 years of existence (*DI* 7.14–17). This disaster, no more than two centuries distant (7.25), would, however, be followed by a first resurrection of bodies, already predicted by the Sibyls and other external authorities, and the return of Christ, whose earthly ministry had been focused on wisdom, virtue,

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[4] For the development of interpretations of this prophecy, see Croke, *Christian Chronicles and Byzantine History 5th–6th Centuries*, ch. 2; and see Adler and Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos,* xliii, 467–70.

and justice, to introduce a new Golden Age: true justice would rule on Earth for a further millennium until the final confrontation with evil and the Last Judgement (7.24–6). The fact that Jupiter, whose expulsion of his father Saturn had initiated the decline in human affairs, was the special divine companion of the senior emperor Diocletian, gave contemporary bite to the message; Hercules, the divinity singled out for criticism, was the companion of Galerius, the author of the Persecution of 303.[5] The Tetrarchs feature prominently in *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, composed after the conversion of Constantine, in which Lactantius provides a predictable account of the misfortunes which befell those wicked emperors such as Nero and Domitian who had persecuted the Church. His most important targets are Diocletian, and more particularly Galerius, through whose persecutions Lactantius had lived: the gruesome fate of Galerius, with his bowels consumed by worms and his belated decision to terminate persecution, furnished a firm basis for Lactantius' triumphalist message (*DMP* 33–4).

Whereas Julius Africanus had successfully annexed the Hellenistic tradition of synchronistic chronicles for the defence of Christianity, his decision not to embrace to the full the available secular historical information meant that he cannot be credited with the creation of the Christian world chronicle. That was the achievement of Eusebius (*c.*260–*c.*340) in his *Chronicle*—a work which combined Julius' computations with some of the content of Hellenistic historical summaries. The distinction between their respective works is well summarized in Jerome's references, first to Africanus' 'five books on times', and then to Eusebius' 'all-embracing history of chronological lists and their summary' (*de vir. Ill.* 63, 81).[6] Eusebius divided this work into two distinct parts. The first was a *Chronography*, the raw material for history, comprising tables of rulers and magistrates extracted from a variety of authorities such as Diodorus Siculus, and divided into five broad categories—Chaldaean, Hebrew, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman—along with a chronological summary for each of the key kingdoms whose succession would structure a comprehensive treatment. This part only survives in an Armenian translation of a Syriac intermediary—a reflection of its more specialized nature. The second part is the chronicle proper, the *Chronici Canones*, for whose original appearance the Latin translation by Jerome is the closest witness, although its influence is also reflected by its various adaptations and continuations in Greek, Armenian, and Syriac.[7] To demonstrate clearly the chronological connections between the various kingdoms which dominated world history, the years of their rulers were listed vertically in columns—initially three to cover the Hebrews, Assyrians, and Egyptians, but with the facility to

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[5] Anthony Bowen and Peter Garnsey, *Lactantius Divine Institutes* (Liverpool, 2003), 44 n. 175.

[6] For an overview of this debate, see Croke, *Christian Chronicles and Byzantine History 5th–6th Centuries*, ch. 1. Giving Eusebius credit for initiating the chronicle tradition does not, of course, diminish the considerable contribution of Julius in terms of chronology.

[7] Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 111–13; and Richard W. Burgess, *Studies in Eusebian and Post-Eusebian Chronography* (Stuttgart, 1999), 23–7.

bring in others such as the Persians and Romans, so that the maximum number of columns at any point is nine. Equally, columns were removed when the independent history of their nation lapsed. The controlling sequence for the whole structure was provided by the left-hand column in which the years of Abraham were recorded—a universal marker which in due course was joined by Olympiads. Into this chronological grid, historical notices could be inserted, biblical on one side and non-scriptural on the other, so that particular events could at once be cross-referred to their place in Christian or secular progression.

Quite apart from the greater ambition of Eusebius' project, there were a number of significant departures from Africanus. Most obviously, Eusebius chose to start his world era from the birth of Abraham—the earliest event which he felt could be precisely dated, in the forty-third year of the Assyrian king Ninus. Information about what preceded this was too contentious, although Eusebius did on occasion note his calculation (2, praef. 14.20–15.7). Partly as a result, the overall age of the world was of lesser importance, and he therefore did not promote the millennial calculations which lay at the heart of Africanus' work. He also demonstrated his superiority as a chronographer by challenging and correcting some of Africanus' key dates; for example, for the birth of Moses, or for Jeremiah's oracle relating to the seventy years of Jewish captivity, the latter correction having the advantage of also demolishing one of his predecessor's providential connections. On some issues Eusebius was prepared to accept Jewish scripture rather than the Septuagint; for example, with regard to the period between Exodus and Solomon's Temple (the Hebrew version of 1 Kgs. 6.1 gives 480 years, the equivalent passage in the Septuagint only 440). Eusebius' work concluded in 277/8, though a second edition appeared in 326.[8]

Through its combination of Christian and non-Christian historiographic traditions, Eusebius' *Chronici Canones* furthered the annexation of world history for Christianity at a time when powerful critics such as Porphyry were attempting to undermine its claims, while the conversion of an emperor opened up wider horizons.[9] However, it scarcely touched the history of the Church—a topic for which a gap of two centuries had now opened up between the conclusion of the account of the first generation of Christians in Acts and the present day. This challenge was resolved by Eusebius in another literary innovation, the *Ecclesiastical History*, which elevated the Christian Church to the level of the traditional subjects of secular historiography. The proposed contents are clearly set out in the introduction (*HE* 1.1): episcopal succession from the Apostles, initially in the sees of Rome and Alexandria, but then supplemented by Antioch and Jerusalem,

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[8] Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 113.

[9] Richard W. Burgess, 'The Dates and Editions of Eusebius' *Chronici Canones* and *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 48 (1997) 471–504, at pp. 488–9. Porphyry was prepared to accept the antiquity of Moses, though he effectively demolished the prophecies in Daniel by demonstrating that the book had been composed in the mid second century BC, after Antiochus IV Epiphanes' confrontation with the Jews.

provides the framework in association with the sequence of Roman emperors; significant events in the history of the Church, Christian leaders, and writers (with people being much more important for Eusebius); heretics and the misfortunes of the Jews; and finally persecutions and the great deeds of the martyrs to which these gave rise. The interest in Christian writing, unsurprising in a leading biblical commentator, included the establishment of the canon of New Testament books (*HE* 3.3).[10] Eusebius does not seem to have been particularly interested in the possibility of development within Christianity.[11] Thus the expansion of the Church through missionary activity and other conversions is not a theme. Partly as a result, Eusebius tended to overstate the early impact of the Christian message, and to rely on particular reports on highly placed Christians to generalize about its rapid success. Equally heresy, which could be presented as part of the progress of imperfect human understanding towards exact comprehension of divine truth (for example, Evagrius, *HE* 1.11), was for Eusebius a diversion from the complete truth revealed during the Incarnation and preserved through the Apostolic Tradition. A considerable element of this diversion came from Jewish influences, so that the triumph over heresy links to the coverage of Jewish misfortunes.

One feature which distinguishes Eusebius' historiographical approach from most classical historians was his use of documents. Authors such as Thucydides and Polybius had included the occasional document—for example, the texts of important treaties—but in Eusebius the bulk of his narrative is constructed through citation of different texts: Josephus on the Jewish Revolt, the letter of the churches at Vienne and Lyons describing the local martyrdoms under Marcus Aurelius, and the letters of Dionysius of Alexandria. Whereas classical historians had been trained to win their audiences through attractive rhetoric, Eusebius had long operated in a literary context where citation of textual authority was essential for success in discussing alternative interpretations of a biblical passage or doctrinal issue. Another difference in his history is in its treatment of contemporary events. It was common for classical authors, especially those covering a considerable chronological span, to produce a much fuller and more detailed narrative as they approached their own times, simply because they knew more and had access to better sources. If there were particular reasons for them not to record contemporary events, as hinted at in Tacitus' *sine ira et studio* comment (*Annals* 1.1), they simply did not write about the reign of the current emperor, but it was still possible for authors such as Cassius Dio to cover the events of their own lifetime in some detail. Eusebius chose not to avoid contemporary events, and the Great Persecution which dominates books 8 and 9 is powerfully recorded from a local perspective; but Book 10, which was progressively extended in the final major stages of writing, provides a very limited account of the actions of Constantine the Christian emperor.

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[10] Cf. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 139–40.   [11] Ibid., 131–4.

The date of composition of the *Ecclesiastical History* impinges on this discussion. The traditional assumption that its genesis followed the triumph of the Church with Constantine's victory in the West and Licinius' support for toleration in the 'Edict' of Milan was challenged by Barnes, who identified an initial version in seven books which preceded the Great Persecution. This would suggest a different climate for Eusebius' conception of the project, with the late third-century 'peace of the Church' rather than the events of 312/13 creating the confidence to stimulate composition of its history. The balance of opinion has now reverted to the traditional dating, and this certainly provides a clear and intelligible context, with the Martyrdoms of Palestine in Book 9 serving as its climax.[12] What is agreed is that the first version was followed by intermittent continuations during Constantine's reign. The first substantial element is Eusebius' own oration on the dedication of a church at Tyre, followed by a collection of imperial letters in which Constantine and Licinius confirmed various benefits for the Church and Christians; and finally, Constantine's triumph over Licinius is recorded. Granted Eusebius' commitment to dealing with heresy, the lack of a clear treatment of the Donatist schism in Africa,[13] and even more so of the opening stages of the Arian dispute which dominated doctrinal discussions in the East and in which Eusebius was closely involved,[14] is striking. The balance of material is less ecclesiastical than might have been expected. Explanations have been advanced—for example, that Eusebius did not want to undermine the message of Christian triumph by recording at length such difficult issues, that he found it hard to determine the longer-term significance of such recent events, or that he treated his *Life of Constantine* as the effective continuation of both his earlier works.[15] Whatever the reason, in both these respects—documents and contemporary coverage—Eusebius established a precedent for later ecclesiastical historians.

In terms of chronography, the impact of Eusebius' initiatives was such that, however paradoxically, his work does not survive in its original language. In Greek, Eusebius' *Chronici Canones* was part of a living tradition whose continuators and interpreters extended, reshaped, or corrected his contribution

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[12] Ibid., ch. 8; rejected by Andrew Louth in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. G. A. Williamson, rev. Louth, (Harmondsworth, 1989); and also Burgess, 'The Dates and Editions of Eusebius' *Chronici Canones* and *Historia Ecclesiastica*'.

[13] The schism arose from the difficult issue of how to treat people who had collaborated in the Great Persecution by handing over Church property, but soon revolved around the control of the Church in Africa.

[14] This dispute concerned the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. Although there was no single Arian position, they held that in some way God the Son was not fully identical with God the Father. In 325 the Council of Nicaea attempted to resolve the argument by adopting the Homoousian formula, that the Father and Son were of the same substance—a position which Eusebius accepted only under duress, and that very briefly. In the East the argument dominated debate until Theodosius summoned the Council of Constantinople in 381.

[15] Richard W. Burgess, *Studies in Eusebian and Post-Eusebian Chronography* (Stuttgart, 1999), 74–9.

to the extent that there was no advantage in preserving copies of his original version.[16] Jerome, in his Latin translation and continuation to 378, found Eusebius' coverage of the Roman historical period to be unacceptably brief, and so made considerable additions. He also disagreed with Eusebius on such fundamental dates as the foundation of Rome and the Crucifixion, so that some chronological readjustment was necessary.[17] Jerome's continuation, which was completed in 382, stimulated a diverse Latin tradition of chronography over the next two centuries, with authors starting from a version of Jerome, often considerably abbreviated, and adding continuations to their own times, usually with a focus on their own geographical area.[18] Prosper of Aquitaine produced three extensions between 433 and 455, the Spanish Hydatius brought his version down to 468/9, various 'Gallic' chronicles were compiled between the mid fifth and early sixth centuries, while Marcellinus Comes, Cassiodorus, Victor of Tununa, John of Biclar, and Marius of Avrenches created versions in the sixth century—and there were certainly numerous other chronicles, perhaps often with a very local focus, which have completely disappeared from view. Some of these authors, such as Jerome and Hydatius, followed Eusebius in terms of adopting a chronological framework of years from Abraham and Olympiads, but many other writers gave precedence to consular years as their dating formula. In part this reflected the focus of their works, with the extension to cover recent events being more significant than Eusebius' establishment of Christian time; in part it responded to the increased popularity during the fourth century of the tradition of *consularia*—annotated consular lists, which delivered within a Roman framework what Eusebius had done within Christian history. There was also some diversity in the level of detail which these authors provided: while the majority adopted the brevity espoused by Eusebius, others, most notably Hydatius, attempted to provide a more comprehensive account of recent events, especially as they affected their own locale.[19]

In the East, Eusebius experienced this sort of continuation—for example, by an unidentified mid-fourth-century writer who took a positive view of the anti-Nicene emperor, Constantius II[20]—but there were also significant challenges to his authority. In Alexandria, two monks—Panodorus and his follower and critic Annianus—proposed various corrections to his framework for biblical chronology, abandoning Eusebius' Years of Abraham in favour of Years of Adam, the *annus mundi* system, though they differed in their calculation of the date of

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[16] For a daring attempt to reconstruct the last section of Eusebius' *Chronicle*, see ibid., 46–65.

[17] Ibid., 23–5, 90–8.

[18] Overview in Brian Croke, *Count Marcellinus and his Chronicle* (Oxford, 2001), 154–64.

[19] Richard W. Burgess in Hydatius, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana: Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of the Roman Empire*, ed. and trans. Burgess (Oxford, 1993), 9.

[20] For a possible reconstruction of this work, see Burgess, *Studies in Eusebian and Post-Eusebian Chronography*, study 2.

Creation. It is difficult to reconstruct their contributions in detail, since Panodorus' work is known almost entirely through its use in the early ninth century by George Syncellus, while Annianus is attested in the Syriac chronicle tradition as well as George. Panodorus was complimented by George for his wide erudition, and he appears to have relied on the *Handy Tables* of Claudius Ptolemy for some of his calculations, which led to the antedating (on George's reckoning) of the Incarnation by seven years. During the fourth century, controversies about the correct method for establishing the date of the movable feast of Easter had raised the importance of establishing a secure method for calculating, in advance, the first full moon after the spring equinox. This was a priority for Annianus writing under the emperor Arcadius, and his work was structured around recurring Easter cycles of 532 years, which combined the nineteen-year lunar and twenty-eight-year solar cycles. These cycles also had relevance to the beginning of time, because of the common assumption that God placed a full moon in the heavens on the fourth day of Creation: therefore the world had to begin in a year when the moon was full on 29 March. Panodorus and Annianus were not the only Greek continuators, or reworkers, of Eusebius, but there is even less to be said about other possible names, such as the fifth-century chronicler Nestorianus, who is named as a source by Malalas.

One particular off-shoot of Eusebius' *Chronici Canones* is the city chronicle. There had previously been chronicles with a particular local focus—for example, the *fasti consulares* of the Roman Republic, which had recorded the names of key magistrates and major cult events relating to the city of Rome—but the tradition appears to have been reinvigorated in the fourth century. The earliest examples are either mere scraps—for example, the papyrus fragments of an illustrated chronicle with an Alexandrian focus from the late fourth century (*Pap. Golenischev*) which can also be linked to the excerpts from a Latin translation (*Excerpta Barbari*)[21]—or are lost after being subsumed into subsequent works, such as the work of the Antiochene Domninus, another of the sources of Malalas. Marcellinus Comes designed his Latin *Chronicle* as a continuation of Jerome;[22] its first version concluded with Anastasius' death in 518, but this was then extended to 534 by Marcellinus himself, and then by a different author to at least 548, where the relevant manuscript breaks off. Among its sources was a Constantinopolitan city chronicle covering the years 395 to 469, and the capital and its Balkan hinterland are an important focus; unsurprising, since Marcellinus originated in Illyricum and made his career at court. The *Chronicle* provides an insight into the evolution of the capital's increasingly complex liturgical calendar as new events, such as earthquakes, or objects, such as relics, had to be celebrated. A rather different text, preserved in the eighth-century Syriac *Chronicle*

[21] Croke, *Christian Chronicles and Byzantine History 5th–6th Centuries*, ch. 4.
[22] For full discussion, see Croke, *Count Marcellinus and his Chronicle*; the translation by Croke [*The Chronicle of Marcellinus* (Sydney, 1995)], needs to be used with caution.

of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre (also know as the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*), passes under the name of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, though its scope is best illustrated by title: *A Chronographical Narrative of the Distress which occurred in Edessa, Amid, and All Mesopotamia.* This is a chronicle in the sense that its material is organized under annual entries, with the dating mechanism of the Years of Alexander (the Seleucid Era which was calculated from October 312 BC) as is standard in Syriac historiography, but is distinctive in providing extremely detailed accounts of local events such as famines and Persian sieges.[23]

The most famous of these early chronicles, and one which reflects the diversity of its antecedents, was composed by John Malalas, an Antiochene who probably served in one of the government offices located in that city. Malalas' account stretched from Adam to his own day, with a first version probably finishing in 527 at the accession of Justinian, thereafter extended to 533 and then continued, albeit with a more Constantinopolitan focus, and perhaps after a gap of a decade or so by a different author, down to 565.[24] As with Eusebius, the original version of the *Chronicle* does not survive, but it can be substantially reconstructed from an abbreviated Greek version with supplements from its offshoots in later Greek, Syriac, Slavonic, Coptic, and Latin writers.[25] His work effectively established the genre of world chronicle, which was destined to be the most significant form of Byzantine historiography through the next millennium.

The preface announces two objectives: recounting the course of sacred history as presented in the Christian chronographic tradition, and summarizing events from Adam to the emperor Zeno and his successors. Malalas organized his material into eighteen books, with the framework for Books 1–8 provided by the biblical narrative from Adam to the high-priesthood of Addous. In these books, however, biblical material does not predominate, and instead much attention is accorded to secular events; for example, the origins within historical time of the various pagan divinities (Book 1) or the Trojan War (Book 5). Books 9–14 cover Roman history from the Republic to Zeno's accession, whereafter—arguably the point at which Malalas could no longer depend on the framework supplied by a predecessor such as Nestorianus—the remaining books are each devoted to the reign of a single emperor: Zeno, Anastasius, Justin I, and Justinian. In this final section the narrative becomes extremely detailed with lengthy accounts of the Persian War of 527 and, in particular, the Nika Riot of 532, that are comparable in richness to Pseudo-Joshua. In 533 the start of the continuation is marked by a

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[23] *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite*, trans. Frank R. Trombley and John W. Watt (Liverpool, 2000).
[24] Brian Croke, 'Malalas, the Man and his Work', in Elizabeth Jeffreys with Croke, and Roger Scott (eds.), *Studies in John Malalas* (Sydney, 1990), 1–25.
[25] This extremely difficult task was most ably carried out by the team led by Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, and Roger Scott, *The Chronicle of John Malalas: A Translation*, (Melbourne, 1986); see also the discussions in Jeffreys with Croke and Scott (eds.), *Studies in John Malalas*.

profound change in coverage, with very brief notices for the first decade, and some chronological jumbling, until the continuator in turn approached his own period of composition. Unlike Eusebius and other chronographic predecessors, Malalas did not attempt to date events to specific years, and he does not provide an annalistic framework; indeed it is only in the final books that most events are accorded a specific date: sometimes a regnal year, sometimes an indiction date. The computation of time, however, was of fundamental importance for Malalas, and at various points he includes a calculation of Years from Adam, but he was writing after the burst of millennial fervour generated circa 500 by the approach of the crucial year 6,000 had passed. Perhaps as a consequence, he chose to attach the year 6,000 to the most important event in world history: the Crucifixion (10.2),[26] and stressed that the world was now well launched into its seventh millennium in a passage located in the year 528 (18.8).[27]

In addition to the embedded continuation, Malalas' work was used by other authors as the foundation for world chronicles. One which seems to have been reasonably close in format and scope to Malalas was composed by John of Antioch, whose name and origin provide ample opportunity for confusion with his predecessor. Most of our knowledge derives from excerpts in the handbooks commissioned in the tenth century by Constantine Porphyrogennitus, but John appears to have used a wider range of sources for Roman republican history and also to have incorporated a wider selection of authors on the late empire.[28] The last surviving extract relates to the overthrow of Phocas in 610, and this is usually assumed to be the date of completion, though it is possible both that the work extended somewhat further and that the material from the early seventh century represented a continuation of the basic text. More can be said about Malalas' other early offshoot, the anonymous *Chronicon Paschale*, which was probably compiled by a member of the Constantinopolitan clergy in AD 630.[29] Unlike Malalas, chronological precision was of great importance to the author, to the extent that every year from the Creation is given its own entry, with appropriate dating markers such as Olympiads, regnal years, consulships, indictions, and years of the main metropolitan bishops. This information is recorded even when the author had no information to enter under a given year. There is greater attention to biblical material and the history of the early Church than in Malalas, and conversely less coverage of secular events and fewer extended narratives. Like Malalas, however, the very end of the chronicle is marked by detailed accounts

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[26] The original text has to be reconstructed, since the Greek tradition massaged Malalas' figures into line with standard calculations: see Elizabeth Jeffreys, 'Chronological Structures in Malalas' Chronicle', in Jeffreys with Croke and Scott (eds.), *Studies in John Malalas*, 111–66, at pp. 116–18.

[27] This passage may mark a continuation point of the *Chronicle*'s first version.

[28] Roger Scott, 'The Byzantine Chronicle after Malalas', in Jeffreys with Croke and Scott (eds.), *Studies in John Malalas*, 38–54.

[29] Discussion in the introduction to *Chronicon Paschale, 284–628 AD*, trans. Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby (Liverpool, 1989).

of contemporary events which are given a pronounced Christian flavour: the siege of Constantinople in 626 when the city's survival could be attributed to the Virgin's protection, and Heraclius' triumph over the godless Persian king Khusro, which was narrated through the medium of dispatches from the emperor that highlighted the Christian angle.[30] The author's most important concern was to establish the chronological connections between the Creation and Incarnation and the main Church feasts, especially Easter, hence the name of the work. Quite why this was an issue in the 620s is unclear, but in 623 the philosopher Stephen of Alexandria concluded a short chronological treatise with a chapter on Easter which tied the dating of Easter to the current indiction cycle.[31]

Ecclesiastical historiography is the other major literary initiative of Eusebius. As a result there is an inevitable tendency to regard Eusebius' work as the norm for an Ecclesiastical History and to talk in terms of a solid tradition with clear generic boundaries which might constrain as well as direct the practitioners.[32] Close examination of the main contributors to the tradition demonstrates the fragility of these assumptions.[33] The genre is constituted by its subject matter, the narrative of Church history, but this could be approached from a variety of angles, with markedly divergent attitudes to issues such as Providence and divine intervention, diverse priorities over subject matter such as the prominence attached to monasticism or conversion, and in different stylistic levels. The genre is distinguished from that of classicizing history in terms of core subject, though the facts that both traditions focused on conflict, internal and doctrinal on the one hand and external and military on the other, that they proclaimed the accuracy of their accounts, and that most of the respective authors had received similar literary educations mean that the genres are parallel rather than separate. Ecclesiastical History must also be distinguished from the numerous collections of documents, which were compiled for specific, often historical, purposes and which constituted an important element of the raw material for the history of the Church. Like the histories, these collections often had a specific purpose, to demonstrate the validity of a particular point of view or to preserve the memory of a particular argument, so that they are certainly not neutral records of events and discussions, but they are less comprehensive in their coverage than the full histories, and the individual editorial input is much less explicit.

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[30] The end of the chronicle is lost, but it is quite possible that the restoration to Jerusalem on 21 March 630 of the fragment of the Holy Cross pillaged by the Persians in 614 marked the climax.

[31] J. Beaucamp et al., 'La Chronique Paschale: Le temps approprié', in *Le Temps chrétien de la fin de l'Antiquité au Moyen Age* (Colloques du CNRS 404, 1984), 451–68. Stephen is also connected with a set of consular *fasti* which conclude in 630.

[32] For example, Pauline Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus: The Church Historian* (Louvain, 1981), ch. 3.

[33] *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, trans. Michael Whitby (Liverpool, 2000), pp. lv–lx; and Peter Van Nuffelen, *Un Héritage de paix et de piété: Étude sur les histoires ecclésiastiques de Socrate et de Sozomène* (Leuven, 2004), 207–17.

As with the chronicle tradition, the first significant offshoot of Eusebius' *Church History* was an expanded Latin translation—in this case by Rufinus of Aquileia, an energetic translator of Greek works who crossed swords with Jerome over Origenism as well as the usefulness of pagan literature.[34] Rufinus had been commissioned in 402 by his local bishop, Chromatius, to translate Eusebius in order to reassure the Christians of Aquileia during the Gothic siege of their city by demonstrating the long-term success of the Church through God's favour (Rufinus, *HE* prologue). At points he expanded Eusebius' accounts, but his main contribution was the addition of two books which continued the narrative of the true faith, through the challenges to the Council of Nicaea and the interlude of Julian the Apostate, to the death of Theodosius I, who is presented as the standard for imitation by other rulers. Another possible early continuator is Gelasius, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine from 367 to 395, who is connected by Photius (*Bibliotheca*, *codex* 88, p. 12.30) with a re-edition and supplement of Eusebius' account which provided considerable information on the Council of Nicaea and the Arian reaction.[35] Our knowledge, however, is complicated by various factors—for example, the composition of an Ecclesiastical History by Gelasius of Cyzicus in the fifth century[36]—the fact that Photius believed that Gelasius had translated the *History* of Rufinus which was only commissioned several years after Gelasius' death, and the links between the *History* of Socrates and Rufinus on which the traditional, and natural, view that Socrates exploited his predecessor has now been powerfully challenged with the suggestion that all our information about Gelasius the historian related to a late fifth-century imposter, Pseudo-Gelasius of Caesarea.[37] In the circumstances, speculation is best avoided.

In the Greek East the last decade of the reign of Theodosius II (440–50) saw an extraordinary upsurge in ecclesiastical historiography, with three extant continuations of Eusebius composed from an orthodox, Nicene, perspective by Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, in this chronological order;[38] slightly earlier the anti-Nicene Philostorgius had also continued Eusebius, but we only have indirect knowledge of this work through its summary by Photius and influence on other texts such as the *Passio Artemii*.[39] From early on there has been a

[34] P. Van Deun, 'The Church Historians after Eusebius', in Gabriele Marasco (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century A.D.* (Leiden, 2003), 151–76 at pp. 160–7.

[35] Ibid., 152–60.

[36] The limited information is reviewed by Gabriele Marasco, 'The Church Historians (II): Philostorgius and Gelasius of Cyzicus', in Marasco (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity*, 257–88, at pp. 284–7.

[37] Peter Van Nuffelen, 'Gélase de Césarée: Un compilateur du cinquième siécle', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 95 (2002), 621–39.

[38] Overview in H. Leppin, H., 'The Church Historians (I): Socrates, Sozomenus, and Theodoretus', in Marasco (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity*, 219–54; very detailed consideration of Socrates and Sozomen in Van Nuffelen, *Un Héritage de paix et de piété*.

[39] Marasco, 'The Church Historians (II)', 284–7.

tendency to treat the orthodox trio together, with Theodore Lector, for example, in the early sixth century, producing a *historia tripartita* which combined extracts from these authors into a single account. Closer attention to the individual writers has highlighted their different approaches, while not ignoring their contextual unity. In terms of background, the authors were very different. Not much can be said about Philostorgius, beyond a connection with the anti-Nicene bishop of Cyzicus, Eunomius, and a fierce commitment to the latter's doctrinal position which determined Philostorgius' presentation of ecclesiastical issues and secular rulers. Socrates was a well-educated Constantinopolitan, whose epithet of *scholasticus* would indicate a legal background, if it could be trusted;[40] his sympathetic attitude towards the Novatian community and its leaders strongly suggests that he was attached to this rigorist sect. Sozomen, by contrast, certainly was a lawyer whose education and career path had led him from the hinterland of Gaza to Constantinople in search of preferment; he was firmly orthodox and he appears to have viewed writing as part of his struggle for personal advancement. Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus for at least thirty years (*c.*430–60), was the leading theologian in the Antiochene Christological tradition. This inevitably brought him into conflict with Cyril of Alexandria and his successor Dioscorus, and led to attacks by Theodosius II as a supporter of the exiled Nestorius, and then deposition at the 'Robber' Synod of Ephesus in 449; his restoration at Chalcedon in 451 was one of the more controversial acts of that Synod.[41] Much of his prolific output is lost, but the *Historia Religiosa*—a collection of saints' lives, mainly Syrian—survives in addition to the history of the Church.

   As an author from the losing side in doctrinal debate, Philostorgius unsurprisingly adopted a negative view of historical progress from the triumph of Constantine's conversion. Constantius II and Valens, as rulers who did not accept the Nicene position, are treated positively, though the case of the unfortunate Valens was particularly challenging, since his death in the disaster of Adrianople presented the Nicenes with clear evidence for divine disapproval. The reign of Theodosius I is characterized by prodigies, which presaged the empire's misfortunes, natural as well as military, in the early fifth century; these are clear signs of divine anger as well as being eschatologically significant. By contrast the orthodox historians of the 440s offer a positive view of the present, which ignores

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[40] Doubts expressed by Van Nuffelen, *Un Héritage de paix et de piété*, 8–9.

[41] Following the resolution of the Arian dispute, Christological discussion in the fifth century was concerned with how the elements in Christ, full manhood and full Godhead, were combined. Nestorius, drawing on the Antiochene tradition which stressed the equality of Christ's humanity and divinity, sought to explain the relationship by maintaining a distinction of natures within a unified person. By contrast, the Alexandrian tradition developed by Cyril focused on Christ the Word made flesh as a unified being, but did not consider the mechanics of the union. Chalcedon attempted a compromise with a formula that proclaimed Christ to be one person made known in two natures.

the military and theological difficulties that increased considerably as the 440s advanced. For Socrates, the reign of Theodosius II had brought the Church back to the ideal position it had occupied immediately after the triumph of Constantine and before the disruptions of the Arian dispute. Since he regarded the troubles of the Church as intricately connected with secular difficulties (for example, *HE* 5 preface 2–5), it followed that the restoration of ecclesiastical harmony would produce secular benefits, and his final book lavishly praises the character and achievements of Theodosius in this respect (7.22, 42). The perspective of Sozomen is somewhat different, though the terminus is the same, albeit with greater attention to the achievements and impact of Pulcheria, Theodosius' sister (9.1). He saw the Church continuing to expand from its Constantinian state, as a result both of energetic conversion activity, beyond the empire through missionary activity and internally by the actions of monks, and of the elimination of heresies. The historical trajectory in Theodoret is somewhat less positive, since he conceived history as a struggle between mankind and the forces of evil, and his negative view of emperors, understandable in the light of his persecution by Theodosius II, meant that he was more likely to highlight occasions when rulers bowed to the authority of the Church (for example, Theodosius I and Ambrose of Milan) than to praise particular individuals.

Thus all these authors had a message, or messages, to convey through their history, and they are not the guileless writers that a superficial study might suggest. Socrates, for example, deliberately espoused a relatively simple style which belied his considerable education, but he juggled with chronology, and used select rhetorical techniques such as *amplificatio*, and judicious introduction of direct speech and biblical citation to push certain interpretations; for example, his negative view of John Chrysostom.[42] Sozomen, while proclaiming an admirable reliance on sources with direct knowledge of events, and citing several documents, characteristics which have earned him a good reputation among most modern commentators, in fact relied heavily on earlier narrative sources, including Socrates, whose information he recast in line with his preferences.[43] Manipulation of events is more blatant in Theodoret than his two predecessors, so that, for example, the death of Jovian, which in Sozomen had been attributed to either gluttony or the poisonous atmosphere in his bedchamber (*HE* 6.6.1), is reinterpreted as a divine decision to remove from the world an excessively good ruler, in order to demonstrate to mortal sinners the benefits they were missing (*HE* 4.5).

But there are also similarities. Most notably, none of the writers says much about contemporary issues, to the extent that it is often asserted that the final book of Sozomen's *History* was left unfinished. The problem for these authors was that Nestorius' period as patriarch of Constantinople, which terminated

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[42] Van Nuffelen, *Un Héritage de paix et de piété*, 269–78.   [43] Ibid., 242–62.

after the Council of Ephesus (431), had ushered in a new and increasingly divisive Christological dispute that at different points threatened virtual schism between the spheres of Alexandria and Antioch, led to the expulsion of several bishops from the diocese of Oriens, and frequently involved the imperial administration in Church affairs. Socrates, though the earliest of the authors, at least alludes to the start of the problem, probably because he was interested in negative information about Nestorius, who had been hostile to the Novatians. Sozomen and Theodoret are much less informative, even though the latter was closely involved. Just as Eusebius was challenged by the uncertainties surrounding the long-term outcome of Nicaea, so too the three Theodosian orthodox authors could not predict how the Nestorian dispute would terminate: silence was the best approach.[44] With regard to secular events, Socrates was, arguably, composing before the full extent of the Hunnic threat became apparent, but it is less plausible to claim that Sozomen and, even less, Theodoret did not have some experience of the ravages of Attila. Again, silence was the best policy.

The Greek tradition of ecclesiastical historiography then appears to experience a hiatus of almost 150 years, until Evagrius undertook the challenge in around 590, but this disguises other activity. Towards the end of the fifth century, Zachariah of Mitylene took up the narratives of Socrates and Theodoret to record the Nestorian and Eutychian disputes from an anti-Chalcedonian angle. This account only survives in a late sixth-century Syriac translation and continuation, but it presents a predictable catalogue of heroes and villains, with devout prelates of Alexandria, such as Dioscorus and Timothy Aelurus, having to withstand the Chalcedonian preferences of Constantinople.[45] The opposite perspective is presented in Theodore Lector, an associate of Patriarch Macedonius of Constantinople who accompanied him into exile for opposition to the anti-Chalcedonian policies of Anastasius. Theodore, however, unlike the other ecclesiastical historians under discussion, produced an overall history of the Church, the first part reusing Eusebius and Gelasius, the second amalgamating the three Theodosian writers, and the third being his own contribution down to Anastasius' death in 518.[46] Both Zachariah and Theodore maintain a much narrower focus on material relevant to their doctrinal argument than Eusebius and his earlier continuators, and this is also true for the *Breviarium causae Nestorianorum et Eutychian* [Short History of the Case of the Nestorians and Eutychians] by Liberatus—a Latin work produced in the mid sixth century in the context of the Three Chapters Dispute, one of the doctrinal aftershocks of Chalcedon which pitted Emperor Justinian against much of the Latin West. Understanding fifth-century developments was relevant to this dispute, and the work has a predictable suspicion of rulers who attempt to interfere in Church affairs.[47]

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[44] Michael Whitby, 'The Church Historians and Chalcedon', in Marasco, (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity*, 447–93, at pp. 452–3.
  [45] Ibid., 459–66.   [46] Ibid., 467–72.   [47] Ibid., 472–7.

The Syriac tradition of hostility to Chalcedon generated another anti-Chalcedonian narrative in the *Ecclesiastical History* by John of Ephesus. The first two parts of this work, which ran from Julius Caesar to the early years of Justin II (*c*.568), are lost, although they appear to have exploited a certain amount of information from Malalas, which would indicate an interesting amalgamation of the two strands of the post-Eusebian tradition. The third part survives in six books which describe the disputes and tribulations of the Monophysite communities during the reigns of Justin II and Tiberius and the early years of Maurice.[48] There are several confusions and repetitions in the account, which it is difficult to ascribe entirely to the possible difficulties of composition during a time of quasi-persecution. As so often, the final book is a primarily secular narrative, whose inclusion John justified on the grounds of the eschatological significance of the events (*HE* 6.1).

Evagrius is the final writer in this tradition to be considered.[49] From his vantage point as legal adviser to the Chalcedonian patriarch Gregory of Antioch, he composed a continuation of the Theodosian writers which began with the opening salvoes of the Nestorian dispute, contained a detailed account of Chalcedon which was supplemented by a longer account in a quasi-appendix, and covered the various challenges and reactions to the Council over the following 120 years. He had clear views about the qualities expected of emperors, bishops, and other leaders; orthodoxy was an important consideration, but not an over-riding one, so that the anti-Chalcedonian Anastasius receives a positive assessment, whereas Justinian, in spite of his support for the Council, was damned for his interference, especially in the affairs of Antioch. He was prepared to include significant secular events, with some material borrowed from Procopius, though this is selected and reshaped to highlight the religious significance of events, and his final book is almost entirely secular in focus, although Patriarch Gregory contributes significantly to the empire's military achievements.

Somewhat separate from the tradition of Ecclesiastical History is what can be termed Christian History, a history of the world from a Christian perspective. Only one example is extant, by Orosius, though a limited amount can be reconstructed about the voluminous contribution in Greek by Philip of Side, another Theodosian author, from the hostile testimony of Socrates (*HE* 7.27). Philip constructed a massive work in thirty-six books, each of which comprised several volumes, so that there were more than 1,000 in total. The account ran from the Creation to the present, but was distracted by numerous erudite digressions on subjects such as mathematics, astronomy, geography, and much more. The Spanish Orosius produced a very different work in terms of scale, though it too

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[48] J. J. Van Ginkel, 'John of Ephesus: A Monophysite Historian in Sixth-Century Byzantium', D.Phil. thesis, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 1995.

[49] Michael Whitby, 'Introduction', in *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus*, trans. Whitby; and Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus*, chs. 1, 3.

ran from the Creation to the present day; in this case 417.[50] He had been asked by Augustine to compose a historical response to the Gothic sack of Rome in 410, and the assertions that this disaster had been the fault of the Christian abandonment of traditional religion; its title, *The History against the Pagans*, reflects this project. The first of its seven books cover from Adam to the foundation of Rome, whereafter Roman history dominates. There is a certain amount of attention to misfortunes of the Republic, such as the Gallic sack of the early fourth century BC or the first-century civil wars—events which helped to demonstrate that recent disasters were nothing new in Roman experience—but there is also a positive and optimistic approach to Roman history. The triumph of Rome was intertwined with the triumph of Christianity, since God had chosen to send his Son to dwell on Earth precisely when the reign of Augustus had restored peace to the world and ushered in the Principate. Orosius identified a number of ways in which divine favour for Augustus had been displayed, and created a specific link to Christ by asserting that Rome's new era was launched through the combined closure of the Temple of Janus and assumption of the name Augustus on the same day, 6 January, on which Christ would subsequently reveal himself to mankind at Epiphany.[51] The Romans effectively took over as God's chosen people from the Jews, who had forfeited this privilege through persecuting the Messiah, and received their punishment from Rome in the suppression of the Revolt of 66–70. As a result, the empire under pious leadership received considerable benefits, with its barbarian enemies either killing each other (7.43.15) or becoming peaceful neighbours through conversion to Christianity (7.32). The marriage of the Visigoth Athaulf to Galla Placidia was used to symbolize the scope for Roman renewal through Christian collaboration between the wild strength of the Goths and the legally based might of the empire (7.43).

In both chronography and ecclesiastical historiography, Christian writers, with Eusebius in the van, adopted elements of earlier historiographic practice to produce significant new traditions. Hagiography is another area in which Eusebian influence can be argued, since, although the *Life of Antony* by Anastasius is usually regarded as the first proper life of a saint, the *Vita Constantini* of Eusebius had already shown the way in adapting the classical tradition of biographical encomium to a Christian subject.[52] In the same way as classical biography took a wide variety of forms, so Christian hagiography was very diverse, embracing collections of sayings or miracles and assemblages of short lives of

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[50] G. Zecchini, 'Latin Historiography: Jerome, Orosius and the Western Chronicles', in Marasco, (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity*, 317–45, at pp. 319–29; and Andy Fear, 'The Christian Optimism of Paulus Orosius', in David Hook (ed.), *From Orosius to the Historia Silense: Four Essays on the Late Antique and Early Medieval Historiography of the Iberian Peninsula* (Manchester, 2005), 1–16.

[51] Orosius 6.20. Octavian in fact closed the Temple of Janus on 11 January 29, and assumed the name Augustus on 16 January 27 BC.

[52] Averil Cameron and S. G. Hall, *Eusebius Life of Constantine* (Oxford, 1999), 27–34.

different saints through to substantial accounts of the whole life of the hono-rand.[53] Practitioners of other forms of Christian historiography contributed significantly to hagiography: Jerome was responsible for introducing the genre to the Latin West through his translation of Athanasius' *Life of Antony* and compo-sition of his own *Life of Paul of Thebes*, Theoderet's *Historia Religiosa* was an important collection of information about the monks of Syria, while a century later John of Ephesus compiled a comparable dossier on anti-Chalcedonian champions.

One distinctive aspect of hagiography is that, in contrast to the subjects of classical biographies (such as Plutarch's *Lives*), the individuals being celebrated were often of very humble origins, and their actions, while extraordinary, might be located in the routines of everyday life. Thus many of the narratives or vignettes provide an insight into the sorts of ordinary activities and relationships which are overlooked in most other forms of ancient literature apart from comedy, and to which mainstream historiography with its focus on the activities of elites, whether secular or religious, was especially blind. Some of the earliest hagio-graphy takes the form of collections, either of sayings (for example, the *Apophthe-gmata Patrum*) or of brief lives which effectively flesh out these sayings (such as the *Vitae Patrum*), and there was always a demand for compendia of lives that was satisfied, for example, by the Latin collections of Gregory of Tours in the sixth century (*Glory of the Martyrs*, *Glory of the Confessors*, *Life of the Fathers*), or the reworking in the tenth century of over 140 Greek lives by Symeon the Meta-phrast. The act of composition came to be an important part of the construction of sanctity—the vital negotiation whereby respect for a living focus of devotion was transformed into recognition of a continuing force, or attraction, after death, with the need for a successor to inherit the leadership of the enterprise.

Content and approach were very varied, dependent both on what the hono-rand was best known for, and on what messages the author wanted to convey through the act of commemorative composition. Some lives have a strong doctrinal thrust (such as the *Life of Eutychius*), others focus on a particular virtue (charity in the case of *John the Almsgiver*), or a particular moment (Chalcedon in the *Life of Dioscorus*), and a few texts approach the narrative depth of a tradi-tional history (whether ecclesiastical or secular)—for example, the *Life of Daniel the Stylite* on tensions during the brief reign of the usurper Basiliscus (475/6), or the *Miracles of St Demetrius* on the Avaro-Slav attacks on Thessalonica in the late sixth and early seventh centuries. In some cases there are interesting divergences of emphasis between different linguistic traditions of a life. The Greek *Life of Pachomius* arguably reflects the opinions of the minority of Greek monks in the

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[53] Succinct overview with further references in Alice-Mary Talbot, 'Hagiography', in Elizabeth Jeffreys, John Haldon, and Robin Cormack (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), 862–71.

coenobium, and stresses the attachment of the monks to the see of Alexandria, as opposed to Athanasius as an individual patriarch, while ignoring the failure of Pachomius' first attempt at creating a community which is attested in the Coptic tradition.[54] The Syriac *Life of Symeon the Stylite* pays more attention to the social impact of some of his miracles than does the Greek life by the monk Antony, and the two traditions disagree on the circumstances of the saint's death with the Syriac text emphasizing the involvement of the community in controlling the moment of transition, whereas in the Greek life it is Antony alone who notices that Symeon has died and then alerts the local bishops rather than the immediate community.[55] In many cases these individual histories operate at an intersection between oral tradition, the memories handed down within a particular community, and literary record, and they can beguile us with their impression of immediacy and veracity. It is, however, essential to remember that the preserved histories are complex constructions which reflect the expectations of their communities, with the reality of the saint's life being secondary to the enduring message. But for the preservation of a handful of letters written by Antony which reveal him to be an educated man with some philosophical interests who pursued the ascetic life, in part, for intellectual reasons, we would have no way of contextualizing the picture presented in the *Life* by Athanasius of an illiterate rustic inspired to greatness by Christ. At the same time it is often the literary depiction which influenced subsequent actions, with the image of individuals such as Antony or Symeon Stylites generating numerous imitators.

So far this chapter has considered various ways in which Christian writers adapted classical forms of historical composition to record different aspects of the new religion, but it is also worth touching, briefly, on how the secular tradition of historiography came to be affected by Christianity. After the conversion of Constantine it was difficult for the author of a grand traditional history of war, diplomacy, and imperial events to ignore Christianity, since it increasingly permeated significant aspects of public life. In the fourth century the major authors were not Christian, and their reactions to the inevitable presence of Christian elements in their narratives ranged from the ostensible neutrality of Ammianus writing in the 390s, though his ironical comments and pointed presentation challenged the claims of Christianity as effectively as direct attack,[56] to the open hostility of Eunapius (*c.*400) who blamed the new religion for the incompetence of Valens and the weaknesses of the empire.[57] The fragmentary

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[54] See H. Chadwick, 'Pachomios and the Idea of Sanctity', in Sergei Heckel (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint* (London, 1981), 11–24.

[55] Brief discussion in Robin Lane Fox, 'The *Life of Daniel*', in M. J. Edwards and Simon Swain (eds.), *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1997), 175–225, at pp. 181–5.

[56] John Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London, 1989), 435–51; and Timothy D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), ch. 8.

[57] W. Liebeschuetz, 'Pagan Historiography and the Decline of Empire', in Marasco, (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity*, 177–218, at pp. 191–201.

survival of the major fifth-century historians, Priscus and Malchus, means that it is impossible to be certain of their religious affiliation or how they presented Christian elements.[58] In the sixth century, after the anti-Christian diatribe of Zosimus, we have a succession of authors whose religious views, if not beyond discussion, are reasonably clear, and whose narratives show how writers operating within a very traditional genre accommodated Christian views. Although, in keeping with the classical or classicizing tradition of historiography, authors such as Procopius, writing in the 540s and 550s, and Agathias, writing in the 570s, affected detachment when touching on religious issues, and tended to employ circumlocutions to avoid the intrusion of non-classical terminology into their texts,[59] at specific points they also made clear their religious allegiance and considered how specifically Christian concerns—for example, the goodness and omniscience of God or the limits to human understanding—could be related to the realities of contemporary warfare or natural disasters (Procopius, *Wars* 2.9.13; Agathias, *History* 1.1.3–4; 5.3.5–9).[60] With regard to Theophylact Simocatta, the last in the succession of classicizing historians in Late Antiquity, there is no doubt as to his religious affiliation, even though he too affects, to an extent, the detachment of his predecessors: one of the traditional speeches which decorate his narrative is accorded to a bishop, and both it and a pre-battle harangue exploit clear Christian arguments (5.4; 3.13). He assimilated a Christian, and arguably a hagiographic, presentation of his central character, Emperor Maurice (8.11); he incorporated a digression on a Christian miracle which resulted in the punishment of a pagan magician (1.11); and he accepted the Septuagint as a source of appropriate language.[61]

Christianity brought to the composition of history particular concerns, such as the place of Christ's Incarnation in the progression of world history and the importance of chronological precision in understanding the future as well as the past of the world. It also introduced new subjects, such as the challenge of heresy, the conduct of Church Councils, and the actions of leading Christians, unofficial holy men and monks, as well as established leaders. Above all, it set up alongside the empire an organization whose development and relationship with

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[58] R. Blockley, 'The Development of Greek Historiography: Priscus, Malchus, Candidus', in Marasco, (ed.), *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity*, 286–315, at pp. 308–9.

[59] Alan Cameron and Averil Cameron, 'Christianity and Tradition in the Historiography of the Later Roman Empire', *Classical Quarterly*, 14 (1964), 316–28.

[60] Discussion of these and other passages in Michael Whitby, 'Religious Views of Procopius and Agathias', in Dariusz Brodka and Michal Stachura (eds.), *Continuity and Change: Studies in Late Antique Historiography*, *Electrum*, 13 (2007), 73–93, rebutting the arguments of Anthony Kaldellis, 'The Historical and Religious Views of Agathias: A Reinterpretation', *Byzantion*, 69 (1999), 206–52, and id., *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 2004); see also D. Brodka, 'Die geschictsmächtigen Faktoren in den *Historiae* des Agathias von Myrina', *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 52 (2002), 161–76.

[61] Discussion of these aspects in Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and his Historian: Theophylact Simocatta on Persian and Balkan Warfare* (Oxford, 1988).

the secular powers deserved to be recorded. The tradition of historiography in the Graeco-Roman world was powerful, but also diverse. Under the impulse of Christianity this tradition developed even greater diversity to be one of the high points of literary production across the whole period of Late Antiquity, with an influence that extended beyond the traditional literary languages of Greek and Latin.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

170s	Persecution under Marcus Aurelius
284	Accession of Diocletian and evolution of Tetrarchy
303	'Great' Persecution of Diocletian and Galerius
312	Conversion of Constantine; Battle of Milvian Bridge; Constantine as emperor of West
324	Defeat of Licinius; Constantine as sole ruler of Roman Empire
325	Council of Nicaea
337	Death of Constantine
337–61	Reign of Constantius II, Arian ascendancy
361–3	Reign of Julian the Apostate
379–95	Reign of Theodosius I, triumph of Nicene doctrines
408–50	Reign of Theodosius II
431	First Council of Ephesus; expulsion of Nestorius
449	Second, 'Robber', Council of Ephesus
451	Council of Chalcedon
491–518	Reign of Anastasius; reaction against Chalcedon
527–65	Reign of Justinian I
565–78	Reign of Justin II
626	Avar siege of Constantinople

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Chapter 15

History and Inscriptions, China

Edward L. Shaughnessy

The earliest writing currently attested in China's archaeological inventory comes from about 1200 BC, during the reign of the Shang dynasty (*c.*1500–1045 BC) king Wu Ding. This writing comes in two forms: inscriptions carved into turtle shells or ox bones, generally known in the West as 'oracle-bone inscriptions', and inscriptions cast into bronze vessels, usually referred to as 'bronze inscriptions'. The oracle-bone inscriptions recorded prayers intended to determine a wide range of future events, including—but by no means limited to—warfare, hunting, agriculture, weather, illness, birth-giving, and so on. Some of these inscriptions also included the king's prognostication of whether the prayer would be successful or not and/or a *post facto* record of whether the event had indeed turned out as desired or as predicted. The earliest bronze inscriptions included only the name of the person for whom the bronze vessel, presumably intended to be used in ritual activities (especially sacrifices to the ancestors), was cast. Over time the inscriptions evolved to record a momentous occasion to be commemorated, usually a royal award to the person for whom the vessel was made. Both oracle-bone and bronze inscriptions continued to be produced well into the Zhou dynasty (1045–256 BC), though both sorts of inscription underwent important changes. For the purposes of this chapter I will survey the inscriptional record only to the eighth century BC, at which time other sorts of written records begin to appear in the historiographical inventory. Indeed, in both the oracle-bone and bronze inscriptions, there is already evidence—both direct and indirect—for other sorts of contemporary written records, presumably written on more perishable materials such as wood or bamboo. Although none of these other sorts of written record has yet been discovered for the period under consideration here, their importance as historical records may be even greater than the inscriptions presently known.

In China, historians routinely refer to the oracle-bone and bronze inscriptions as the fountainhead of China's long historiographical tradition. In the West, on the other hand, some scholars have recently begun to argue that because both these sorts of inscription were produced within the context of religious ceremonies— the one in anticipation of events to come, and the other in commemoration

of events already past—they should not be interpreted as historical records per se. This latter argument is based on the premise that records, just because they are written, do not reflect history *as it really was*, but rather were influenced by their context and the subjective intentions of their creators. Important—indeed, essential—as this premise is, it is one that applies to all written records, not just those pertaining to religious activities, and is well known to historians. With suitable qualifications, the oracle-bone and bronze inscriptions of ancient China can certainly be used, both to rewrite the history of its period, and also to divine some of the core historiographical tendencies that would develop in China's later historical traditions.

ORACLE-BONE INSCRIPTIONS

Although the practice of using turtle shells to perform divinations, which eventually would come to be phrased as prayerful statements of one's hopes for the future, continued in China until at least the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), and while there was always some intimation that the kings of the Shang dynasty had also performed such divinations, it was not until nearly the end of the Qing dynasty, in 1899, that the earliest inscribed bones and shells now known were finally unearthed and recognized as records from the Shang dynasty. The story of how the noted antiquarian and palaeographer Wang Yirong had his servant purchase 'dragon bones' from the apothecaries in Beijing in an attempt to treat the malaria from which he was suffering, and how he then recognized the inscriptions on them as examples of China's earliest writing, has now entered into the legend of modern Chinese historiography. The publication in 1903 of Wang's collection of these inscriptions set off a hunt to find where they were buried. This hunt led quickly to the village of Xiaotun, just outside of the city of Anyang, in north-central China's Henan province. This was significant because Anyang was known from historical records as the site of the Shang dynasty's last capital. Xiaotun village would eventually be the first site to be excavated, beginning in 1928, by the Institute of History and Philology of the Republic of China's Academia Sinica, and in 1950 would become the first archaeological site to be protected by the newly established People's Republic of China. Excavations continue there to the present time. In addition to numerous discoveries of building sites and tombs, and manifold examples of the material life of the Shang dynasty, these excavations have also turned up tens of thousands of pieces of inscribed turtle shell and ox bone.

Three discoveries have been particularly important: Pit YH 127, excavated in June, 1936, which produced 17,000 pieces of turtle shell dating to the time of King Wu Ding and bearing inscriptions pertaining to royal activities; an area called Xiaotun Locus South (Xiaotun *nandi*), excavated in 1972, with about 6,000 pieces of ox bone that proved crucial for arriving at a correct periodization

of all Shang oracle-bone inscriptions; and a site at the village of Huayuanzhuang, excavated in 1990, that produced almost 600 intact turtle plastrons bearing inscriptions more or less contemporary with those from YH127, but apparently from a different family or cultural context. Different from all of these Shang oracle bones was the discovery in 1977 at Fengchu village in Qishan county, Shaanxi province—the heartland of the subsequent Zhou dynasty—of a signif-icant cache of inscribed turtle shells, decisively showing that oracle-bone divina-tion continued to be performed even after that dynasty had overthrown the Shang. Over the course of the last century, the study of these inscriptions has developed into a highly specialized field, generally referred to in the West as 'oracle-bone studies'. Although the specificity (and the difficulty) of the many tens of thousands of individual inscriptions now known make oracle-bone studies a daunting field, their place at the beginning of China's written tradition ensures their historiographical significance. In the following section I will describe in brief how they were produced, what they reveal about the history of their period, and what they may show about their historiography.

THE PRODUCTION OF ORACLE-BONE INSCRIPTIONS

In China, the term for oracle-bone inscriptions is *jiaguwen,* 'writing on shell and bone', which reflects the material on which these inscriptions were usually inscribed: the plastron (the flat underbelly) of a turtle shell and the scapula bones (the long smooth bones that run from the shoulders of the cow down the front legs) of oxen. These materials were probably chosen in the first place for their ritual and mantic significance: the oxen were probably first sacrificed to the ancestors, and turtles—famous for being long-lived—have long been regarded in China as particularly numinous animals. They both also afforded a relatively large, smooth surface on which to write—a feature that the Shang diviners exploited to the full. Both bones and shells were first prepared with a series of hollows carved and drilled into the rougher of the two sides (in both cases, the side facing inward on the animal), almost, but not quite, penetrating through to the other side. In the act of divination, a 'command' or charge would be addressed to the turtle or bone concerning some future topic, usually quite specific, and then a hot brand was inserted into one of these hollows, causing a stress crack to appear on the reverse side of the shell or bone. These cracks took the shape of ⼘ which in the inscriptions is also the pictograph for the word *bu*, 'to divine by crack-making' (the pronunciation *bu* is probably also onomatopoeic; the original pronunciation of the word would have been something like *puk).

    The king, or in rare cases another officer, would then examine these cracks to determine their auspiciousness for the topic divined. At some later date an inscription would be carved into the shell or bone beside the relevant crack. These inscriptions would usually include the day on which the crack had been

made (indicated as one of a cycle of sixty days used in ancient China), and/or the name of the diviner who had presided over the divination; in oracle-bone studies, this portion of the inscription is generally referred to as the Preface. Then follows the Charge. In the earliest inscriptions known (those of the Shi Group), these were phrased as positive–negative questions, but there are very few of these inscriptions, and they seem to have been produced only in the early years of King Wu Ding's reign. In the most common inscriptions of the Shang dynasty, from later in the reign of Wu Ding (the Bin Group), the Charge evolved into paired divinations, with a positive–statement on the right-hand side of the shell (from the reader's perspective), and a negative statement on the left-hand side, perhaps akin to the daisy-picking form of divination—'she loves me, she loves me not'—performed by small children in America. By the end of the Shang dynasty, these paired Charges gave way to a single, conceptually positive statement ('in the next ten-day week, there will be no misfortune', and 'the king will go to XYZ; going and coming there will be no disaster' are by far the two most common statements). In the subsequent Zhou dynasty, divination Charges were routinely concluded with a prayer ('would that there be no misfortune', 'would that it can be done', and so on). The Charge could be followed by a Prognostication, usually introduced by the phrase 'The king read the crack and said…'. In a curious theological reversal, whereas prognostications by the king Wu Ding were almost always negative or pessimistic (predicting some misfortune), by the end of the Shang dynasty, when the scope of divination had become much reduced, prognostications were invariably positive (simply 'The king read the cracks and said: "Auspicious".'). Finally, in some cases, inscriptions also include a Verification, almost always indicating that the king's prognostication had in fact turned out to be correct.

HISTORY AS SEEN IN ORACLE-BONE INSCRIPTIONS

Oracle-bone inscriptions from the reign of Shang king Wu Ding are not only the earliest writing presently known in China, but they also comprise well over half of all Shang dynasty oracle-bone inscriptions, and an even higher percentage of those that would be regarded as historically significant. As mentioned above, these inscriptions touch on virtually every aspect of the king's state and personal affairs (indeed, there would seem to have been no separation of state and self when it came to the king). The king routinely divined about sacrifices to his ancestors (these inscriptions show that the genealogy of Shang kings preserved in traditional sources was correct, except for one minor detail), the weather and the harvest, his travels and hunts, and so on. He also divined about more specific events, including warfare, opening new agricultural lands, establishing new cities, the birth-giving of his numerous wives and consorts, as well as about various aches and pains of his own and other members of the royal family.

In a sketch such as this, it is not possible to document all of these royal interests. However, it is possible to show, if only in the most general terms, how inscriptions about warfare can be used to reconstruct something of the history of the period.

According to the very sketchy traditional historical record of the Shang dynasty, Wu Ding's uncle Pan Geng first moved the capital to the vicinity of Anyang, and there is certainly ample, if circumstantial, archaeological evidence to support this. There are intimations that in the period immediately preceding this move, the Shang kings had been weak and besieged with a number of problems, and that the move to Anyang was intended to buy them some security. There is better evidence that by an early stage of Wu Ding's reign (the early stage of the period covered by the Bin Group inscriptions, perhaps about 1210 BC), the Shang were firmly in control of the area around Anyang and stretching west as far as the Taihang Mountain range, south to beyond the Yellow River, and east well into the Shandong peninsula. Oracle-bone inscriptions show Wu Ding allying with various local lords to push Shang hegemony still farther west, with numerous inscriptions about Shang attacks on polities located in the southwestern portion of present-day Shanxi province, and farther north across the Fen River, perhaps even as far as the north–south stretch of the Yellow River separating the present-day provinces of Shanxi and Shaanxi. Some of these attacks were led by a Shang officer or ally (perhaps a royal son-in-law) named Que:

Crack-making on *gengshen* (day 57), the king divining: (We) will capture Fou.

Divining: Que might not capture Fou.   (*Heji* 6834a)[1]

Crack-making on *wuwu* (day 55), Ke divining: Que might reach Xuanfang and have a capture.   (*Heji* 6947a)

Crack-making on *guimao* (day 40), Ke divining: Call out to Que to attack Gen and Yue.   (*Heji* 6948a)

Although these inscriptions simply record the Shang proposal to carry out these attacks, with very few Verifications to indicate that the attacks were in fact successful, other inscriptions from later in Wu Ding's reign suggest that at least some of the targets of the Shang attacks had subsequently become Shang allies.

Crack-making on *jiwei* (day 56), Ke divining: Fou might come to see the king. First month.   (*Heji* 1027a)

Crack-making on *renchen* (day 29), divining: Xuan will not have misfortune.

(*Heji* 10184)

Crack-making on *jichou* (day 26), Bin divining: Yue will receive (aid).   (*Heji* 561)

In these three inscriptions, the Shang king divined about Fou, Xuan (to be identified with the Xuanfang of the second inscription in the first group of three

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[1] Most Shang oracle-bone inscriptions are now routinely cited according to their entry number in Hu Houxuan (ed.), *Jiaguwen heji*, 13 vols. (n.p., 1982).

above, the 'fang' there indicating that it was regarded as an enemy 'country'), and Yue in the way used for friends' or allies' inscriptions. Of these places, Yue seems to have been the westernmost territory brought under Shang control. Perhaps because of this, it seems to have been one of the first allies to have been stripped away, probably in the early 1190s, in the course of a major war toward the end of Wu Ding's lengthy reign. This seems to have been initiated by the Tufang and especially Gongfang—Shang enemies located still farther west and north.

Crack-making on *jichou* (day 26), Ke divining: Command Yue to come and say, Yue will broadly attack Gongfang. In the tenth month.   (*Yingcang* 1179a)

Crack-making on *jisi* (day 6), Bin divining: Gongfang did not really defeat Yue.

(*Heji* 6371)

Again, these are Charges and not Verifications. Nevertheless, in inscriptions from toward the end of the dynasty, Yue or Yuefang, as it is sometimes called, once again became the target of Shang attacks, suggesting that it had indeed again switched allegiance.

By the last two reigns of the Shang dynasty, those of kings Di Yi and Di Xin, Shang military attention seems to have turned closer to home. By then, most inscriptions had become quite routine, as shown by the following example from a series of about 150 inscriptions from a lengthy campaign against the Renfang people of the Huai River valley:

Crack-making on *guiyou*, at You, Yong divining: 'In the next ten-day week, the king will have no misfortune.' It was when the king was coming from attacking the Renfang.

(*Heji* 36494)

By comparing the date and place notations in the Prefaces of these inscriptions, it is possible to reconstruct in considerable detail the route and calendar of the army's march. Indeed, from this reconstructed calendar, stretching over as many as nine months, it is also possible to determine that the campaign took place from the autumn of 1077 BC through the spring of 1076 BC—a date that can serve as one of the cornerstones of the attempt to reconstruct the political chronology of ancient China.

However, some inscriptions at this time were much longer and much more complex. One of these, probably from the preceding reign of Di Yi (and very possibly from the ninth year of his reign), seems to propose marshalling the many allies to attack one Yan, the ruler of the Yufang, a state probably located along the Qin River in south-eastern Shanxi province, not far from the Anyang basin. The inscription is extremely difficult, with numerous expressions that appear in it for the first time (and since it comes toward the very end of the dynasty, also for the last time). I present it, with just a couple of minor revisions, in the translation of David N. Keightley, the dean of oracle-bone scholars in the West:

(*Preface*:) On *dingmao* (day 4), the king made cracks and divined. (*Secondary Preface*:) Today, the bone and divining stalks have nine times brought down omens (?) (about the following topic:) (*Charge*:) 'I will ally with the Many Fieldsmen and the Many Elders to march to attack Yan, the leader of Yufang. When (I) end the *yi*-day ritual (I, we, they ?) will march to attack (the Yufang); there will be no obstructions. From the Upper and Lower (Ancestors) to the sacrificial (?) Ancestors, I will receive abundant assistance. (I) will specifically not be struck. (I can) [make an announcement] to (at?) this great settlement Shang that there will be no harm in the omens.' (*Prognostication*:) [The king read the cracks and said:] 'There will be prolonged luck.' (*Postface*:) In the tenth month, (at the time in the weekly cycle when, on the day *dingmao*, we) performed the meeting ceremony for the *yi* ritual of Da Ding (the 2nd Shang king).   (*Heji* 36511)[2]

What must originally have been an even longer inscription, though now unfortunately quite fragmentary, from about the same time, records the results of such an attack (though probably not the same attack). As far as we can tell, this is not the record of a divination (though the Charge may be among the portions of the inscription no longer extant), but rather the record of a great victory. Although even many of the characters that remain are susceptible to different readings, it appears that the Shang defeated at least three enemies, capturing their leaders and numerous soldiers and armaments, and then executed the leaders (sacrificing them to royal ancestors).

…Minor Vassal Qiang allied to attack, capturing Rou of Wei…24 men, 1,570 of Er, 100+ of Fan…horses, two chariots, 183 ?, 50 quivers of arrows,…herewith having an offering to Da Yi, sacrificing Yin, the leader of Shen…Fan to Zu Yi, and sacrificing Rou to Zu Ding. Ran said: 'The capital bestows….'   (*Heji* 36481a)

As we will see in the case of bronze inscriptions, there is a general tendency in these inscriptions to accentuate the positive, always proposing to defeat the enemy and, of course, never commemorating their own defeats (there is also a propensity among many scholars to forget this subjective quality of the inscriptional record). In the case of the Shang dynasty, despite the victories won against these enemies, within another generation there would emerge a more formidable enemy, the Zhou, which would bring the dynasty to an end.

ORACLE-BONE INSCRIPTIONS AS SECONDARY SOURCES

Keightley, whose translation of the longest Shang oracle-bone inscription was quoted above, has begun one of his last studies of the general nature of these inscriptions—a study with the provocative title of 'The Diviners' Notebooks:

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[2]   David N. Keightley, 'The Diviners' Notebooks: Shang Oracle-Bone Inscriptions as Secondary Sources', in Yau Shun-chiu and Chrystelle Marchal (eds.), *Actes du Colloque International Commémorant le Centenaire de la Découverte des Inscriptions sur Os et Carapaces* (Paris, 2001), 23.

Shang Oracle-Bone Inscriptions as Secondary Sources'—with the following admission:

I had, for many years, assumed that these divination inscriptions were primary sources—carved into the bones as records of what had actually transpired, shortly after the moment of divination. While this may have been true in some cases, I now believe that a significant number of the divination inscriptions represent a secondary version— sometimes abbreviated or adjusted—of an original record that is now lost to us.[3]

Keightley presents various sorts of evidence demonstrating that many inscriptions could not have been carved immediately after the divination, while others refer to specific information from well before the moment of divination. An example of this can be seen in the three inscriptions on an ox scapula from the reign of Wu Ding, the first two of which are non-divinatory in nature (what Chinese scholars term 'inscriptions recording events' [*ji shi keci*]).

On *guimao* (day 40), (we) *yi*-offered, at Yijing, Qiang (victims), three men, and split open ten cows. On the right (?).

On *wuxu* (day 35), Lady Xi ritually prepared one (scapula) pair. (Recorded by) Yue.

Crack-making on *dinghai* (day 24), Yong divined: The king will ally with (Zhi) Guo on campaign.   (*Heiji* 390)

A similar conclusion can be drawn from the following single divination inscription, which includes a two-part Verification—the first part twelve days after the initial divination, and the second 175 days later.

Crack-making on [*jia*]*shen* (day 21), divined: 'Shu will successfully recover from his sickness.' On the 12th day, [*yi*]*wei* (day 32), Shu really did [successfully recover]. On the 17(5)th day, [*wu*]*yin* (day 15), Shu again had a sickness. In the night when [*yiwei*] cut into *bingshen* (day 33), [Shu] died.   (*Heji* 13753)

Evidence shows that the Preface and Charge, as well as the Prognostication and/ or Verification of oracle-bone inscriptions—were all carved at the same time. That this divination bone remained available for at least 175 days leads Keightley to conclude:

Not only does this suggest the presence of some kind of filing system for retrieving the bone over this extended period, but it also suggests that, if the charge and verification had indeed been carved at the same time, the diviner had kept a 'notebook' record of his charges and prognostications which the engravers presumably consulted when they finally recorded the divination scenario after Shu's death.[4]

This is a particularly far-reaching conclusion for the beginning of record-keeping, and thus for the beginning of historiography, in China. If it is correct, and I think it surely is, the argument noted above, that in ancient China writing was originally restricted to religious uses, would seem to have little basis.

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[3] Keightley, 'The Diviners' Notebooks', 11.   [4] Ibid., 14.

The evidence from the oracle-bone inscriptions suggests that already in the Shang dynasty there was a well-developed system for keeping records. As we will see in the following section, this was certainly true of the subsequent Zhou dynasty.

BRONZE INSCRIPTIONS

Before the discovery of oracle-bone inscriptions, bronze inscriptions were the earliest form of writing known in China. These inscriptions, generally cast into the insides of bronze ritual vessels (in the cases of bells, they were cast on the outside; in rare cases, at least in the early period that concerns us here, they could also be carved into the bronze), have been unearthed in China since at least the second century BC, the discoveries always being regarded as auspicious omens. The archaeological interests of scholars in the Northern Song dynasty (960–1126) resulted in the collection and publication of over 1,000 ancient bronze vessels, many of them bearing inscriptions. The linguistic turn in the scholarship of the Qing dynasty subsequently focused even greater attention on the inscriptions as invariant instantiations of ancient writing. With the development of modern archaeology in China in the twentieth century, thousands more bronze vessels, both inscribed and uninscribed, have been excavated from ancient tombs and storage caches. The most recent published collections, up to date as far as 1999, include 14,500 individual bronze inscriptions from the Shang and Zhou dynasties; and the turn of the twenty-first century has brought new discoveries with almost every month. As we will see, the inscriptions are wonderfully rich historical sources, especially for the Western Zhou period (1045–771 BC). And like oracle-bone inscriptions, the bronze inscriptions also contain important evidence for how historical records may have been kept in ancient China.

Although bronze tools appeared as early as 3000 BC in north-western China, whence the technology was doubtless imported from areas still farther west, present archaeological evidence suggests that bronze casting did not appear in the central area of China proper until the first centuries of the second millennium BC. One of the first uses of bronze there was for the casting of ritual vessels that had theretofore been made of pottery. None of these early bronzes bears an inscription. However, with the reign of the Shang king Wu Ding, there begin to appear simple inscriptions of the family name or, in rarer cases, the personal name of the person for whom the vessel was cast. Thus, inscriptions on the numerous bronzes in a tomb excavated in 1975 near the Shang royal palace at Xiaotun allowed it to be identified as that of Fu Hao, known from contemporary oracle-bone inscriptions as one of the three principal consorts of Wu Ding. By the end of the Shang dynasty, inscriptions began to be somewhat longer, usually commemorating an award for some meritorious service, as in the case of the *Xiao Chen Yu zun,* better known in the West as the Brundage Rhino. Its brief inscription mentions a Shang campaign against the Renfang, though its fifteenth-year

date would suggest that this was a different campaign from that recorded in the oracle-bone inscriptions examined in the previous section. Perhaps it dates to the reign of King Di Yi, about 1090 BC.

On *dingsi* (day 54), the king inspected the Kui Temple. The king awarded Minor Vassal Yu Kui cowries. It was when the king was coming from attacking the Renfang. It was the king's fifteenth ritual cycle, the *rong*-sacrifice day.   (*Jicheng* 11.5990)[5]

With the Zhou conquest of Shang some fifty years later, casting inscriptions into bronze vessels became much more prevalent. One such inscription commemorates an award made by King Wu of Zhou to an officer named Li just eight days after the conquest.

King Wu rectified Shang; it was *jiazi* (day 1) morning. (King Wu) *sui* and *ding* (caldron)-sacrificed and was able to make known that he had routed the Shang. (On) *xinwei* (day 8), the king was at Jian Encampment and awarded *Charge d'affaires* Li metal. (Li) herewith makes for the Duke of Zhan this treasured precious vessel.   (*Jicheng* 8.4131)

While the inscription on the *Li gui* is not different in kind from that on the *Xiao Chen Yu zun,* others soon became longer and included new sorts of information. The *He zun*, dated to the fifth year of a reign that is almost certainly that of King Wu's son, King Cheng, includes portions of a royal address to the princes of the newly established dynasty.

It was when the king first moved (his) residence to Chengzhou and again received King Wu's abundant blessing from heaven. In the fourth month, *bingxu* (day 23), the king addressed the ancestral young princes in the Capital Chamber, saying: 'Formerly, with your deceased-fathers, the elders were capable of assisting King Wen. And so King Wen received this great mandate. It was after King Wu had conquered the great city Shang, then (he) respectfully reported to Heaven, saying; 'I shall reside (in) this central state (and) from it govern the people.' *Wuhu*! Although you are but young princes without experience, look upon the elders' merit with respect to Heaven, and carry out the commands and reverently make offerings! Help the king make firm his virtue so that Heaven may look favorably upon our indolence.' The king completed the address. He was awarded cowries, thirty strands, and herewith makes for Duke X [name illegible] this treasured offertory vessel. It is the king's fifth ritual cycle.   (*Jicheng* 11.6014)

Just over fifty years later, in the twenty-third year of the reign of King Cheng's son, King Kang, a man who had served as the royal tutor cast a vessel with an inscription that is reminiscent of early chapters of the *Shangshu* [Venerated Documents]*,* a collection of texts that eventually came to be regarded as one of the Chinese classics. In addition to its historical interest, the inscription on the *Da Yu ding* is often studied in histories of Chinese literature and philosophy.

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[5] *Jicheng* refers to Zhongguo Shehui kexueyuan Kaogu yanjiusuo (ed.), *Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng*, 18 vols. (Beijing, 1984–94), the *corpus inscriptionum* for Shang and Zhou period bronze inscriptions; here 'II' refers to the volume number, '5990' to the entry number.

It was the ninth month; the king was at Ancestral Zhou and commanded Yu. The king approved of saying: 'Yu, illustrious King Wen received the Heaven-blessed great mandate. At (the time) King Wu succeeded Wen and made the state, (he) ridded its evil, extending to the four quarters, and governed their people. Among the managers of affairs, he suppressed wine; none dared to get flushed. Having offerings and sacrifices, none dared to get drunk. Therefore, heaven respectfully looked down and treated (him) as a son, and greatly protected the former kings...have the four quarters. I have heard that Yin's losing the mandate was due to the Yin border-lords and fieldsmen and the Yin governors and hundred-officials indulging often in wine, and that (they) therefore lost the troops. *Yi*! You early had great service. It was when I had approached my small learning; you did not press me, your ruler, the one man. Now it is that I approach the pattern and follow King Wen's upright virtue, and as King Wen commanded the two and three governors, now it is that I command you, Yu, to assist Rong respectfully to secure virtue's continuance. Diligently morning and evening, enter to remonstrate, and making offerings hasten to be awed by heaven's awesomeness.' The king said, '*Er*! (I) command you, Yu, to take as pattern your ancestral grandfather Nangong.' The king said, 'Yu, then assist Jia to oversee the Supervisors of the Military. Be diligent and quick in punishments and law-suits; morning and evening assist me, the one man, to uphold the four quarters and when I inspect the people and borderlands received by the former kings. I award you fragrant wine, one flask; a cap and jacket; kneepads and slippers, and a chariot and horses. (I) award you Grandfather Nangong's pennant; use it in procession. (I) award you states' supervisors, four lords, and human retainers from charioteers as far as common men, 659. (I) award you Yi supervisors and king's vassals, thirteen lords, and human retainers, 1,050. Move...from their lands.' The king said, 'Yu, accord with and respect your governance; do not neglect my command.' Yu herewith responds to the king's beneficence, herewith making for grandfather Nangong this treasured *ding*-caldron. It is the king's twenty-third ritual cycle.   (*Jicheng* 5.2837)

By the middle of the Western Zhou period, as the government became organized along more bureaucratic lines, and as royal award and investiture ceremonies became more routine, so too did bronze inscriptions become both more common and, for the most part, more formulaic. An early example of an inscription commemorating an appointment to office, of which there would be hundreds more similar examples over the next century and a half, is that on the *Qiu Wei gui,* the full date notation of which shows that it was cast in 930 BC.

It was the twenty-seventh year, third month, after the growing brightness, *wuxu* (day 35); the king was at Zhou. (He) entered the Great Chamber and assumed position. The Elder of Nan entered and at the right of Qiu Wei entered the gate, standing in the centre of the court facing north. The king called out to the Interior Scribe to award Wei purple knee-pads, a scarlet demi-circlet, and a jingle-bell. Wei bowed and touched his head to the ground, and daring in response to extol the Son of Heaven's illustrious beneficence, herewith makes (for) my cultured grandfather and deceased-father (this) treasured tureen; may Wei's sons' sons and grandsons' grandsons eternally treasure and use (it).

(*Jicheng* 8.4256)

The formulaic nature of the *Qiu Wei gui* inscription does not, by any means, reflect all later Western Zhou bronze inscriptions. Three inscribed bronzes (the *Hu gui* and two *Hu zhong*) were cast for a Zhou king, King Li, and their inscriptions are addressed in the personal name of the king. The longest inscription known from the period, on the famous *Mao Gong ding*, records an address by King Xuan, the penultimate king of the dynasty, to his 'uncle' bemoaning some of the troubles that beset the onset of his reign. Two notable inscriptions, on the *Shi Qiang pan* and the *Qiu pan*, the latter of which will be examined below, present sketch histories of the dynasty (as well as of the families of the two men for whom the vessels were cast), in the first case only through the reign of Qiang's king, King Gong, but in the second case very nearly to the end of the dynasty. Several inscriptions record court cases between individuals and, in one case (the *San shi pan*), between two warring territories, while many others commemorate marriages. As can be imagined, success in battle was a frequent occasion for royal awards, and the inscriptions commemorating these awards often recount memorable scenes of battle. The inscription on the *Jin Hou Su bianzhong*, arrayed across a double chime of sixteen bells, has a particularly dramatic effect.

It was the king's thirty-third year; the king personally went on procession inspecting the eastern regions and southern regions. In the first month, after the growing brightness, *wuwu* (day 55), the king walked from Zongzhou. In the second month, after the full moon, *guimao* (day 40; *sic*), the king entered into Chengzhou. In the second month, after the dying brightness, *renyin* (day 39; *sic*), the king continued going to the east. In the third month, at the dying brightness, the king arrived at Han and divided his ranks. The king personally commanded Su, Lord of Jin: 'Lead your armies leftward crossing X and to the north crossing…to attack the Su Yi.' Su, Lord of Jin, cut off 120 heads and captured 23 prisoners. The king arrived at Xun Citadel. The king in person inspected the armies from a distance. The king arrived at the Lord of Jin's camp. The king descended from his chariot and standing facing south personally commanded Su, Lord of Jin: 'From the northwest corner ram and attack Xun Citadel.' Su, Lord of Jin, led his Secondary Legion, the Young Nobility and the spearmen to be the first to go down and enter, cutting off 100 heads and capturing 11 prisoners. The king arrived at Naolie. The Yi of Naolie went out fleeing. The king commanded Su, Lord of Jin: 'Lead the Grand Chamber's Minor Vassals and charioteers to follow and catch and drive them out.' The Lord of Jin cut off 110 heads and captured 20 prisoners; the Grand Chamber's Minor Vassals and charioteers cut off 150 heads and captured 60 prisoners.

It was when the king was going back, returning to Chengzhou. The noble kinsmen put in order the Military Palace. In the sixth month, first auspiciousness, *wuyin* (day 15), at dawn the king entered the Grand Chamber and assumed position. The king called out to Provisioner Ke to summon Su, Lord of Jin, to enter the gate and stand in the middle of the court. The king personally awarded four colts. Su bowed and touched his head to the ground, and accepted the colts in exiting. He went back and entered, bowed and touched his head to the ground.

On *dinghai* (day 24), at dawn the king presided at the City Attack Palace. Supervisor of Works Yangfu entered at the right of Su, Lord of Jin. The king personally presented Su, Lord of Jin, with one bucket of black-millet sweet-wine, a bow and one hundred arrows, and four horses.

Su dares to extol the Son of Heaven's illustriously beautiful beneficence, herewith making these prime concordant *yang* bronze bells with which to summon the past cultured men; may the past cultured men be strict on high and respected below, abundantly sending down on me much good fortune. May Su for ten thousand years without bound have sons' sons and grandsons' grandsons eternally to treasure these bells.[6]

These bells, used by Su, the lord of the important state of Jin, then located in the south-western part of present-day Shanxi province (the area fought over by the Shang during the reign of King Wu Ding), are as interesting for their archaeological provenance as for their inscription. Throughout the 1980s, archaeologists from Peking University and from the Shanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology had been engaged in excavations of a giant cemetery just outside of the Jin capital, located at present-day Tianma-Qucun. They stopped just before reaching a separate cemetery area containing the tombs of the state's rulers and their consorts. Unfortunately, late in 1992 or early in 1993, tomb robbers, doubtless attracted by the efforts of the archaeologists, found this cemetery first, and opened several of the tombs. In the case of the tomb of Su, otherwise known by his posthumous reign title of Lord Xian of Jin, numerous inscribed bronzes, including the fourteen largest bells of the set translated above, soon appeared on the Hong Kong antiques market. After the Shanghai Museum bought the bells and publicized the find, archaeologists secured this second cemetery and reopened Su's plundered tomb. They found therein the two smallest bells of the second chime, as well as other vessels and artefacts which had been missed by the robbers. This archaeological provenance was particularly important in the case of the inscriptions on the bells because, unlike almost all other Western Zhou bronze inscriptions, these were carved into pre-existing bells. Before the discovery *in situ* of the two smallest bells, some had suspected that this extraordinary inscription was a modern forgery.

With the fall of the Western Zhou in 771 BC, Jin and other states that had been established at the beginning of the dynasty by relatives of the early Zhou kings (the first lord of Jin was a younger brother of King Cheng of Zhou) became essentially independent (many of them were doubtless semi-independent even before the fall of the western capital). By the end of the eighth century BC, the Zhou kings, newly installed in an eastern capital at present-day Luoyang (Henan) had virtually no *de facto* power. Bronze vessels from this period come more and more to reflect regional tendencies. Fortunately or unfortunately, because this

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[6] The translation follows, with minor revisions, that of Jaehoon Shim, 'The "Jinhou Su *Bianzhong*" Inscription and Its Significance', *Early China*, 22 (1997), 49–56.

later period is far better documented in the traditional historical record than is the Western Zhou, the bronze inscriptions from this time are often regarded as having relatively less historical value.

WESTERN ZHOU HISTORY AS SEEN IN BRONZE INSCRIPTIONS

The Western Zhou period is usually regarded as the high tide of bronze inscriptions. This is due in large part to the great number and intrinsic interest of its bronze inscriptions, but is doubtless due in some part to the relative paucity of other historical sources from the period. Events surrounding the Zhou conquest of Shang and the establishment of the dynasty are reasonably well represented in the traditional historical record, as are events from the last two or three reigns of the dynasty, before the western capital was sacked. It almost goes without saying that the narratives of these respective periods have a strong didactic purpose: to show that it was through the peculiar virtue of the early kings that the dynasty came to be established and through the moral failings of the later kings that it fell. The bronze inscriptions from the period are by no means immune to this subjective view of history; indeed, in some ways they are even more prone to always reflect in the most favourable light the people for whom the vessels were cast, and the Zhou kings, who were their patrons. Nevertheless, because inscribed vessels were cast throughout all periods of the dynasty, including those not well represented in other sources, the inscriptions offer an indispensable contemporary view of affairs.

Inscribed bronze vessels from approximately the first century of the Western Zhou have been discovered all over northern China. While there is of course a preponderance of vessels from the north-western province of Shaanxi, which was the homeland of the Zhou people and the site of its primary capital, numerous bronzes have also been found in areas to the east—from Hebei in the north-east to the Shandong peninsula along the eastern seaboard, and throughout the central province of Henan. These bronzes were, by and large, cast by the founders of the colonies that the Zhou established there to rule the newly conquered indigenous people: the descendants of Shao Gong Shi, a son of King Wu and—with King Cheng and Zhou Gong—one of the triumvirate that consolidated Zhou rule after Wu's death, who ruled Yan in the vicinity of Beijing; Bo Qin, the eldest son of Zhou Gong and the first ruler of Lu at Qufu, Shandong; Kangshu Feng, another son of King Wu, who was deputed to rule the capital region of the defeated Shang dynasty; as well as others. However, by the middle of the tenth century BC there is a noticeable fall-off in the number of bronze vessels that have been discovered in these areas. This may have been a consequence of one of the defining events of the early Western Zhou.

In 957 BC, King Zhao, seeking to extend Zhou control into hitherto unconquered areas of the south, apparently met with a disastrous defeat. Traditional historical sources also mention this defeat, although usually in euphemistic terms. Numerous bronze inscriptions were also cast during the period leading up to the climax of the campaign, and allude to it in positive terms. The two contemporary sketch histories also attempt to portray it in the most favourable of lights. But it seems clear that King Zhao not only lost his own life, but also decimated the Zhou standing armies. This seems to have been the end of the Zhou expansionist impulse. From the next hundred years or so, bronze vessels are found primarily in the Zhou capital region.

King Zhao was succeeded by his son, King Mu—a ruler with a rather ambiguous profile in the traditional historical record. For instance, he is praised for having initiated a systematic law code, but condemned for being unable to control his people solely through the force of his own personal virtue. Whatever the value of these traditional evaluations, bronze vessels from his reign do attest to a thoroughgoing reform of government and social institutions. One inscribed vessel—the *Li fangyi*, from the early years of his reign—appears to commemorate the reorganization of the Zhou military, placing a member of an old Zhou family in supreme command of both the western and eastern armies.

It was the eighth month, first auspiciousness; the king entered into the Zhou Temple. Duke Mu at the right of Li stood in the centre of the courtyard, facing north. The king in writing commanded Yin to award Li red knee-pads, a black girdle-pendant, and bit and bridle, saying: 'Herewith supervise the royally enacted Three Supervisors of the Six Armies: the Supervisor of Lands, Supervisor of the Horse and Supervisor of Work.' The king commanded Li, saying: 'Concurrently supervise the Six Armies' and the Eight Armies' seals.' Li bowed and touched his head to the ground, daring in response to extol the king's beneficence, herewith making for my cultured grandfather Yi Gong this treasured offertory vessel. Li says: 'The Son of Heaven is very blessed and very well-founded, for ten-thousand years protecting our ten-thousand states.' Li dares to bow and touch his head to the ground, saying: 'Array my person to continue my predecessors' treasured service.' (*Jicheng* 16.9899)

It was also during this reign that court audiences came to be standardized, as seen in the *Qiu Wei gui* inscription translated above. This seems to bespeak a growing bureaucratization of the government; whereas a relative handful of particularly important figures seemed to act in various capacities at the beginning of the dynasty (as seen, for instance, in the *Da Yu ding* inscription), now officers were appointed to specific posts with more or less well-defined responsibilities.

Another manifestation of these important reforms is found in the bronze vessels themselves. Whereas sets of ritual vessels from the early Western Zhou are quite small and prominently feature wine vessels, beginning about the time of King Mu, vessels intended to be used together grow in number, with multiple versions of the principal meat and grain vessels graduated according to size. Significantly, wine vessels all but disappear from the archaeological inventory.

Numerous modern scholars have called attention to this feature, with Jessica Rawson giving a particularly compelling analysis of the ritual reform it reflects. According to Rawson, whereas rituals with sets of vessels from the early Western Zhou could be performed conjointly by all male members of a family, the proliferation and nature of vessels after the mid-Western Zhou Ritual Reform suggests that rituals came to be performed by one or more ritual specialists, with the family members looking on as spectators.[7] It is likely that this Ritual Reform was influenced, to at least some extent, by the importation of chime bells from south China; these also appear for the first time in Zhou during the reign of King Mu. Chime bells can only produce music when arrayed in sets graduated according to size, which may explain the new vogue in producing grain and meat vessels in graduated sets. And a certain expertise is required to play chime bells, which may explain the apparent professionalization of the corps of ritualists. However this reform took place, and it was surely a gradual development that took as much as a century to reach its mature manifestation, there can be no doubt that the reign of King Mu brought about a manifold change in the Zhou state.

King Mu's reign was followed, apparently without incident, by that of his eldest son, known by the title of King Gong. However, something seems to have gone awry during the reign of his grandson, King Yih. In the traditional historical record we learn that King Yih was anomalous for being succeeded not by his son—at least not immediately—but rather by his uncle, yet another son of King Mu; this was King Xiao. Other statements hint at other troubles. Poets are said to have begun to compose critiques of the royal court, while an historical annals mentions that King Yih moved his capital to a place that translates as Waste Mound. This is a period that is particularly well represented with inscribed bronze vessels. Indeed, in some ways it is too well represented. For instance, there are a great many inscriptions that bear full date notations: the year of reign, the month, the phase of the moon, and the name of the day in the traditional Chinese cycle of sixty. Unfortunately, there appears to be no way to accommodate all of these dates in a single regnal calendar, and many attempts to reconstruct the absolute chronology of the Western Zhou have foundered on this evidence. David S. Nivison, who devoted many years to studying this chronology, seems to have been the first to suggest that King Yih's problems may have led to his exile, with his uncle reigning in the capital—and arrogating the title of king, such that there were two 'kings' reigning simultaneously.[8] Support for this insight may have now surfaced in the form of one of the two bronze inscriptions that provide histories of the dynasty, the *Qiu pan*, which will be

[7] Jessica Rawson, 'Statesmen or Barbarians? The Western Zhou as Seen through their Bronzes', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 75 (1989), 71–95.

[8] David S. Nivison, 'Western Zhou History Reconstructed from Bronze Inscriptions', in George Kuwayama (ed.), *The Great Bronze Age of China: A Symposium* (Los Angeles, 1983), 44–55.

translated in full in the following section. In it, King Yih is treated in the same way as King Li—another king who was forced into exile, with another ruler— Gong Bo He—in the capital. Moreover, King Xiao is praised for having 'again succeeded in the Zhou country'.

Whatever the actual historical situation was at this time, the Zhou ruling house continued to decline for another two generations, through to the eventual reign of King Yih's own son, King Yi, and then that of King Li, whose own reign, as mentioned above, was cut short. After King Li died in his exile, his own son, to be known as King Xuan, was installed as king. King Xuan went on to a very long reign of forty-six years, and is credited—at least for the beginning of his reign—with restoring the fortunes of the Zhou government. Scores of lengthy bronze inscriptions from his reign attest to his active involvement in many aspects of this restoration, from launching military campaigns to both the north-west and south-east to fend off incursions from enemies there, to restructuring the market system around the eastern capital at Luoyang, to more philosophical discussions about the nature of government. It seems that it was he who, in his thirty-third year of reign, personally led the months-long campaign (described in the *Jin Hou Su bianzhong* inscription translated above) east as far as Shan-dong. This inscription describes the campaign as a victory over enemies there. However, correlations with the traditional historical record suggest at least the possibility that it was also intended to meddle in the internal politics of one of the important Zhou colonies there: Lu. This is but one hint that toward the end of King Xuan's reign, royal control began to deteriorate once again. One of the latest bronze inscriptions from his reign, discovered in January 2003, describes yet another battle, apparently much closer to the Zhou capital area. The vessel, made for a Warden Qiu, dates to the forty-second year of this reign (784 BC); together, with the other vessels made for Qiu, to be examined in the following section, it is full of historical interest.[9] Here I will present only the 'command document' portion of this inscription, eliding the introductory time and place notation and the final dedication.

The king approved of saying: 'Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then it was because of your prior wise ancestors and deceased-father's assisting the prior kings to have merit and care with the great mandate that they stabilized the Zhou state. I have not forgotten the wise men's grandson, and it is that I remember your prior ancestors' and deceased-fathers' having merits in the Zhou state, and so I made…court interview. When I initially established Changfu to be lord in Yang, I commanded you to stabilize Changfu's benefices. That you were able to bring stability among his troops is because you were able to take as model your prior ancestors' and deceased-fathers' stopping the Xianyun, and went out to defeat (them) at Jing'a and at Liyan. You were not wearied by the warfare, and you accompanied Changfu

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[9] For the formal report of this discovery see Shaanxi sheng Wenwu ju and Zhonghua Shijitan yishuguan (ed.), *Sheng shi ji jin: Shaanxi Baoji Meixian qingtong jiaocang* (Beijing, 2003).

to pursue and hit the belligerents. Then engaging and broadly attacking (them) at Bow Valley, you manacled prisoners-to-be-interrogated and caught chiefs, and captured weapons, chariots and horses. You have been diligent in military work and have not transgressed my personal command. I award you one *you*-bucket of black-millet wine and (the following) fields: at Hui thirty fields, and at Yi twenty fields.'

The dynasty survived only thirteen more years before its western capital was overrun and King Xuan's son, known as King You, ended as the last king of the period.

BRONZE INSCRIPTIONS AS TERTIARY DOCUMENTS

In the same way that Keightley recognized that oracle-bone inscriptions are secondary documents, based on original records written on some other medium, so too did Herrlee Glessner Creel, one of the pioneers of bronze inscription studies in the West, long ago note that bronze inscriptions are based primarily on written commands given out in the course of the royal audience.[10] This is made explicit in the introductory portion of the *Forty-Second Year Qiu ding* inscription. After indicating the date and place of the audience, and who Warden Qiu's sponsor had been (Supervisor of Works San), the prefatory paragraph goes on to state: 'Yinshi gave the king the award document. The king called out to Scribe Huo to make the award to Qiu in writing.' Then, at the end of the king's address, the inscription continues: 'Qiu saluted and touched his head to the ground, received the written award and went out.' It is clear that the intervening text, introduced with words 'The king approved of saying', represents the royal 'command document' written on bamboo or wooden strips.

Two other inscribed bronzes cast for Warden Qiu provide further insight into the compositional process of bronze inscriptions. The first of these, known as the *Qiu pan,* has been alluded to above. It provides a sketch history of virtually the entire Western Zhou period, from the founding of the dynasty by kings Wen and Wu down to the reigning 'Son of Heaven', King Xuan. Interspersed with brief comments on the achievements of the various Zhou kings are praises of Qiu's own ancestors, members of the Shan family. Although this lengthy inscription warrants translation in full, in the interests of space here I elide descriptions of several generations' exploits as well as the final dedication.

Qiu said: Illustrious was my august high ancestor Shan Gong: So radiant, capable of making bright and wise his virtue, he accompanied and assisted King Wen and King Wu, who pierced the Yin, received Heaven's fine mandate, extended it to the four quarters, and widely inhabited the lands that they opened and bounded, therewith serving as mates to God on High.

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[10] Herrlee Glesner Creel, 'Bronze Inscriptions of the Western Chou Dynasty as Historical Documents', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 56:3 (1936), 342.

With my august high ancestor Gongshu: he was capable of joining and aiding King Cheng, who successfully received the great mandate; when the regional enemies were not obedient, he therewith settled the four regions and the ten-thousand countries.

* * * *

With my august deceased-father Gong Shu: so beautiful and so respectful, harmonious and compliant in government, bright and equable in virtue, he obeyed and assisted King Li.

Qiu has begun by continuing my august ancestors' and deceased-father's duties, diligently morning and evening respecting my sworn service.

And so the Son of Heaven has much awarded Qiu benefices. May the Son of Heaven for ten-thousand years without bound enjoy a yellowing longevity, protect and settle the Zhou country, and rule the four quarters.

The king approved of saying: 'Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then because it was your past wise ancestors and deceased-father who accompanied and assisted the past kings to have merit and care with the great mandate, now it is that I recall your past wise ancestors and deceased-father and extend and increase your command, commanding you to assist Rong Dui, and concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests, to be used for the palace's supply. I award you red kneepads, a black belt, and a bit and bridle.'[11]

There is much to learn from this remarkable inscription. However, for the purposes of this chapter we need focus only on the king's relatively brief command document:

Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then because it was your past wise ancestors and deceased-father who accompanied and assisted the past kings to have merit and care with the great mandate, now it is that I recall your past wise ancestors and deceased-father and extend and increase your command, commanding you to assist Rong Dui, and concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests, to be used for the palace's supply.

Although not made explicit in this inscription, the document given to Qiu at this time was apparently a copy of a document preserved at the royal court. This is clear from yet another vessel with a lengthy inscription made by Qiu the year after his *Forty-Second Year Qiu ding*. This vessel commemorated Qiu's promotion to be in charge of people at Li. The command document quoted in its inscription in turn quotes the command made previously to Qiu and commemorated by the *Qiu pan*. In the following translation I elide the extensive list of gifts given to Qiu, as well as the lengthy prayer to his ancestors which he added at the end of the inscription.

[11] For complete translations of this and the other inscriptions made for Qiu, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, 'The Writing of a Late Western Zhou Bronze Inscription', *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques*, 61:3 (2007), 845–77.

It was the forty-third year, sixth month, after the growing brightness, *dinghai* (day 24); the king was in the Mu Palace of the Zhou Kang Palace. At dawn, the king went to the Zhou Temple and assumed position. Supervisor of Horse Shou at the right of Warden Qiu entered the gate and stood in the centre of the court facing north. Scribe Huo gave the king the command document. The king called out to Yinshi to command Qiu in writing.

The king approved of saying: 'Qiu, illustrious Wen and Wu received the great mandate and extended it to the four quarters. Then it was because of your prior wise deceased-father's assisting the prior kings to have merit and care with the great mandate that they stabilized the Zhou state. And so I have not forgotten the wise men's grandson. *Formerly, I had already commanded you to assist Rong Dui, and concurrently to supervise the four quarters' game and forests, to be used for the palace's supply* [my italics]. Now it is that I recall your prior ancestors and deceased-father's having had merit in the Zhou state and extend and increase your command, commanding you to officiate over and supervise the people of Li. Do not dare to be negligently complacent, but diligently morning and evening help and support our country's small and great plans. In the government affairs in which you assist, do not dare not to be square or a model. In your questioning of the commoners and neighbors, do not dare not to be centered and a model. Do not enrich yourself; if you enrich yourself, it will only be because there are bribes and indulgences, and then you take advantage of widows and widowers, and therewith make resentment for me the one man; those not good will die.'

*   *   *   *

Qiu saluted and touched his head to the ground, received the strips and suspended them in his sash to go out. In return he entered and presented a jade tablet. . . .

It is clear that the royal secretariat, charged by the king to produce a new command to Qiu, went into the royal archives and consulted the command given to him previously, quoting it verbatim in the new command document. From this we can infer that they would have produced two copies of this new command document: one for the royal archives again, presumably placed in Qiu's dossier, and one given to Qiu. In turn, Qiu had this copy copied into the inscription on the *Forty-Third Year Qiu ding* made for him, making that inscription not even a secondary document, but rather a tertiary document.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INSCRIPTIONS
FOR THE CHINESE HISTORICAL TRADITION

The oracle-bone and bronze inscriptions of Bronze Age China deserve the attention of historians, not only because they are the earliest extant examples of writing in China's long literary tradition, but because they also provide enticing glimpses of still more writing that lay behind them. When Keightley writes that 'Shang writing was not limited to the oracle bones, it was not limited to the

king's use, nor was it limited to the Xiaotun area',[12] or when Creel writes that 'We simply have to accept the fact that the Zhous were a people who liked to write books',[13] they have highlighted a significant feature, not only of ancient Chinese statecraft, but also of the development of historiography in ancient China. Both of these eminent historians have seen in their respective sources the existence of royal archives—a supposition that the most recent discoveries of bronze inscriptions have fully confirmed. We can surmise with Keightley that the Shang archives held at least simple records of the oxen sacrificed and divinations performed on behalf of individuals, while the Zhou archives certainly contained copies of the thousands of command documents quoted in bronze inscriptions from the period. How much more the archives contained we can only imagine. To me, it is not at all unreasonable to suppose that the Zhou archives, at least, contained copies of the sorts of royal addresses found in the *Shangshu*. Nor is it unreasonable that the secretaries at the royal court, or even the authors of the lengthy bronze inscriptions examined above, could have produced the poetry preserved in the *Shijing* [Classic of Poetry]—poetry that in almost all respects shares the linguistic expression of the bronze inscriptions. Less well documented, but no less unreasonable, is the possibility that there was a sort of royal saga or sagas from which the author of the *Qiu pan* inscription, for instance, might have drawn in writing his history of the period. Indeed, I suspect that at least one of these sagas took the form of a year-by-year annalistic history, with entries similar to the great-event notations found in bronze inscriptions from as early as the beginning of the dynasty. To be sure, these are mere suppositions at this point, awaiting confirmation (or negation, I suppose, though it is hard to imagine what sort of evidence would negate them) in future archaeological discoveries. In the meantime, however, we can be quite confident in supposing that only a portion—and perhaps just a small portion—of ancient China's writing has yet surfaced.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

*c.*1500–1045 BC	Shang Dynasty
*c.*1200 BC	Oracle bones first produced
1045–771 BC	Western Zhou Dynasty
*c.*982 BC	Da Yu ding (bronze vessel) cast
*c.*785 BC	Qiu Pan (bronze vessel) cast
*c.*1000–600 BC	*Shangshu* and *Shijing* composed
c. AD 1900	Oracle bones rediscovered near Anyang

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[12] Keightley, 'The Diviners' Notebooks', 11.
[13] Herrlee Glessner Creel, *The Birth of China* (New York, 1937), 255 [Chinese spelling changed to Pinyin].

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Chapter 16

Chinese History and Philosophy

David Schaberg

During the earliest stages of Chinese literacy, neither history nor philosophy existed as a distinct entity. The texts that were produced and preserved had both documentary and intellectual value, but nothing in them suggests that their users had asked the sorts of questions that make distinct disciplines of history and philosophy necessary. The texts from these first centuries do not, for instance, test the grounds of knowledge, either of the past or of abstract truths. Instead they reiterate accepted positions. Seeds of history and philosophy are to be found in the bronze inscriptions, the speeches of the *Shangshu* [Venerated Documents], and the songs of the *Shijing* [Classic of Poetry], but they are subsumed in every case to the overriding function of their medium: the celebration and reproduction of an existing social order—specifically the Zhou royal order. Alternative views no doubt existed, but these have not come down to us in writing, and the Zhou texts themselves adopt an unreflective, often triumphalist version of their past and the ideological keys to Zhou success. It would take the disintegration of this order, during the Spring and Autumn period and the subsequent Warring States period, to bring the testing of historical and philosophical positions and the germination of new intellectual disciplines.

During this transitional period, the basic form of historical narrative—and therefore the basic stuff of historical knowledge itself—was the anecdote. Circumstances dictated that this would be the form to which writers gravitated in their efforts to make sense of the past and to cite it in their arguments. These circumstances bear examination, as they left their mark on the emergent disciplines of history and philosophy, and consolidated a connection between them that would last throughout China's imperial period.

In what follows, then, the first task is to define the anecdote as a narrative form, to note some of its enduring features, to explain the various functions to which the form was adapted, and then to give a sense of its prevalence in the surviving texts of the Warring States (480–221 BC), Qin (221–206 BC), and Western Han (202 BC–AD 8) periods. The second section then examines the philosophical implications of anecdotal historical narration through an extraordinary early critique: the *Nan* or 'Problematizing' chapters of the *Han Feizi*

(named for its author, Han Feizi). The final section addresses the models of historical development that emerged from anecdotal history and from various strategies for putting anecdotes in order, some of which long antedated Han Feizi, and some of which responded to the problems he had raised.

THE HISTORICAL ANECDOTE:
FORMS, FUNCTIONS, AND OCCASIONS

In the European tradition, the anecdote was literally something unpublished or 'not given out': a bit of material that lay outside more legitimate conduits of historical information and added an insight that was otherwise unavailable—something all the more telling because it had been kept secret.[1] In ordinary English usage, the anecdote is now a detached or detachable narrative of a single event that is remarkable enough to merit narration on its own. What ties the present meaning of the word to its roots is the sense of gossip; the anecdote is something memorable and tellable, a form well adapted to conversation.[2] European classical antiquity favoured much longer narrative forms for the recounting of quasi-historical tales (such as the siege of Troy) and historical material (such as the Persian and Peloponnesian wars), but made a place for anecdotes in texts linked with conversation, 'table talk', and riddling.[3] Where the anecdote occurs in early European historical works, it interrupts the flow of a coherent larger narrative and provides a supplement that is illustrative but inessential. By a cultural tradition no doubt tied to the religious and political functions of epic, it was accepted that historical truths were best discovered and conveyed in long-form narratives, while short-form narratives were useful for other purposes.

In early China, by contrast, long-form narration is nearly unattested in surviving writings, and the anecdote—or, strictly, a short form of narration best denoted by this term—is all. As the dictionary definition of the English word would suggest, the early Chinese historical anecdote compasses a single event presented with its own beginning, middle, and end, and therefore, as a narrative whole, separable from the surrounding elements in its context, whether these be other anecdotes or non-narrative argumentation. Its brevity, its detachability and, typically, its thematic features make the anecdote adaptable to many different contexts, and therefore eminently retellable. Where an historical event was too complex to be narrated in a single anecdote, or where it was to be narrated in extraordinary detail, the users of anecdotes would retell it in linked

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[1] Joel Fineman, 'The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction', in H. Aram Vesser (ed.), *The New Historicism* (New York, 1989), 49–76.

[2] This definition is based upon that of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which notes the importance of the sense of 'gossip' in connecting the two meanings of the word.

[3] Texts featuring anecdotal narrative include the *Attic Nights* of Aulus Gellius (*c.*125–*c.*180), the *Deipnosophistae* of Athenaeus (*fl. c.*200 AD), and the fables attributed to Aesop (sixth century BC).

series of anecdotes, the elements of which would remain largely detachable even as they were presented together in series.[4]

The early Chinese historical anecdote is typically no more than two or three hundred graphs in length, though it can stretch well beyond normal proportions where a long speech is recounted. A small set of morphological tendencies inform the narrative: it may begin with a date, an identification of the central character, a place, and a general statement of the project or problem that starts the action. Although the anecdote may develop through various kinds of actions, it almost always involves an exchange of speech, whether dialogue or a longer oration with response. The closing of the anecdote normally turns on the speech, and either enunciates or implies a specific judgement on the characters or the events recounted. This judgement is sometimes expressed by a character who has had a part in the action, sometimes by a named individual who comments from another place or time (for example, Confucius), and sometimes by an anonymous observer (often designated *junzi* or 'a gentleman').[5] Since this judgement often echoes or jibes with a position elsewhere expressed as a principle of morality or strategy, the anecdote serves to match historical principles with reasonable abstractions. The early Chinese historical anecdote is a fundamentally didactic form, as valuable for instructing rulers and peers as for training young students.

The tale of Gong zhi Qi and his advice to the lord of Yu—one of the most frequently retold of all early Chinese anecdotes—may serve as an example. Here is the brief version given in the *Huainanzi*, a middle second-century BC essay collection written under the intellectual patronage of Liu An, the King of Huainan. I include with it the framing material that expresses its didactic content and connects it with its immediate context:

What is meant by 'seeming to give but instead taking away'? Lord Xian of Jin wanted to ask permission to pass through Yu in order to attack Guo, and he sent to Yu the jade disk of Chuiji and a team of horses raised in Qu. The lord of Yu, confounded by the disk and the horses, wanted to grant permission for the army to pass. Gong zhi Qi remonstrated: 'This cannot be! Yu and Guo are to each other as the wheels are to a carriage: the wheels depend upon the carriage, while the carriage also depends upon the wheels. Yu and Guo are in a position of mutual reliance. If you grant them permission to pass, then Guo will fall in the morning and Yu will follow it that very evening.' The lord of Yu did not heed him, instead granting Jin permission. Xun Xi attacked Guo and defeated it, then on his return attacked Yu and took its capital. This is what is known as 'seeming to give but instead taking away.'[6]

In this iteration of the anecdote, the date is expressed only indirectly, through the reference to Lord Xian of Jin, who reigned from 676 to 651 BC. The mention

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[4] For this definition of the anecdote and for a discussion of anecdote series, see David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), 172–4, 192–207.

[5] For judgements, see ibid., 179–82.

[6] *Huainanzi jiaoshi*, ann. Zhang Shuangdi, 2 vols. (Beijing, 1997), ii. 1853.

of Yu, a small state adjacent to powerful Jin, and Guo, an equally small state lying just beyond Yu, sets the geographical stage, both for the quoted speech and for the military action that ends the anecdote. Once Jin has defeated Yu, it will have no need to preserve Guo; or, as Gong zhi Qi puts it in another, earlier version of the same anecdote, 'When the lips are gone, the teeth grow cold.'[7] The lesson to be drawn from the anecdote may be expressed in Warring States terms of strategy and Realpolitik, as it is here, or it may be understood in closer connection with the older, more traditional terms of the anecdote itself, as a matter of greed, love of luxury, and benighted resistance to good advice. This last version of the lesson is especially common in anecdotes on remonstrance, which inevitably foreground the claims of ministers as clear-headed guides to their rulers in matters of policy.[8]

Perhaps the earliest version of the Gong zhi Qi anecdote is the one that appears in the *Zuozhuan* [Zuo Tradition], thought to have been composed by the end of the fourth century BC.[9] In comparison with the *Zuozhuan* version, the *Huainanzi* version is simpler, both in plot and in prose style. It reduces an exchange of speeches to a single brief speech by Gong zhi Qi, removes a whole set of citations of ancient texts, and allows the figure of carriage and wheels to bear the entire burden of the warning. Nonetheless, the two versions share some phraseology and are recognizably the same story. The same basic relation obtains among all the versions of the Gong zhi Qi story that have come down to us, and more generally within any set of all the versions of a single tale. In a few instances one text may parallel another so closely as to seem to have been copied from it, but very often any two versions will look instead like retellings of a well-known story, adapted for the context or occasion of the retelling, and related through knowledge and active narrative skill rather than through reading and copying.

That any educated person could be expected to have mastered much of the most important anecdotal lore is clear from speakers' and writers' habit of evoking entire anecdotes in a single title-like phrase, often mustered in parallel construction with one or more others. Thus the author of the 'Yao Asked' chapter of the third-century BC philosophical text *Xunzi* can write: 'In past times, when Yu did not make use of Gong zhi Qi, Jin annexed it; when Lai did not make use of Zima, Qi annexed it; and when King Zhou cut apart Prince Bigan, King Wu won his kingdom. They did not keep worthies close to themselves or make use of the wise, and that is why they themselves died and their states were lost.'[10] A speech recounted in the *Shuoyuan* [Garden of Discourse] builds a Gong zhi Qi

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[7] *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, ann. Yang Bojun, 4 vols. (rev. edn, Beijing, 1990), i. 307 (Xi 5.8; 655 BC).

[8] David Schaberg, 'Remonstrance in Eastern Zhou Historiography', *Early China*, 22 (1998): 133–79.

[9] See note 7 above and Wai-yee Li in this volume.

[10] *Xunzi jijie*, ann. Wang Xianqian, 2 vols. (Beijing, 1988), ii. 552–3. King Zhou was the evil last ruler of Shang, Bigan his loyal critic; nothing sure is known about Zima and the fall of Lai.

allusion into an even larger set of nine parallel failures.[11] The didactic pay-off seems to vary little whether one retells the anecdote or merely mentions it. Speakers and writers no doubt judged the needs of the audience and occasion as they decided how to use historical material, and occasionally (like the author of the *Huainanzi* version) took the opportunity to cite and mould an old story in support of a newer principle.

The early function of anecdotes is already implicit in their persistent didacticism, in the way they are framed for display in texts like the *Huainanzi*, and in the phenomenon of loosely related sets of versions. This body of lore existed for the sake of substantiating arguments about the workings of the world, particularly the political world. It was for the sake of understanding and carrying such arguments that new users learned the lore and in their turn passed it on, and it was for the same reason that users ultimately committed some of the lore to writing, either demonstrating its proper use in recounted speeches and essays or compiling useful treasuries of anecdotes. Historicity mattered to the users of anecdotes, but as a complement to rhetorical aims rather than as a goal in its own right. The details of events often drifted and changed as an anecdote was retold over the centuries, and there is little to suggest that discrepancies of this kind troubled Warring States and early Han writers.[12] Facts were not entirely open to manipulation, but it is significant that, in all the debates of the era, writers so rarely saw fit to question the details of each other's accounts.

An accident of textual history may tend to obscure the early functions of the anecdote and give an exaggerated impression of the era's commitment to straight historical record-keeping. The *Zuozhuan*, which for its style and its great density of detail is rightly judged the oldest of all anecdote collections, is in its current arrangement presented as a commentary on the *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals], the succinct chronicle of events for the years 722 to 479 BC. In this arrangement, the *Zuozhuan* becomes an annalistic history, the succession of narrated events creating a thickness of texture that gives the impression of comprehensive documentary coverage. But there is much to suggest that this presentation of the material of the *Zuozhuan* is the result of a late first-century BC editing of the text, and that in the first centuries of its transmission the *Zuozhuan* anecdotes were arranged not chronologically, but by some other criterion, such as geography or theme.[13] Such an arrangement would have given little sense of historical comprehensiveness, but would have left exposed instead the judgement and didactic lesson of each anecdote. The *Guoyu* [Discourses of the

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[11] *Shuoyuan jiaozheng*, ann. Xiang Zonglu (Beijing, 1987), 217–9.

[12] Only with Sima Qian does a theme of historical verification become at all prominent, and even his *Shiji* includes much anecdotal material that is acknowledged to be unverifiable, legendary, and useful more for its lessons than for its historical truth. See William H. Nienhauser, Jr., in this volume.

[13] See *Hanshu*, 12 vols. (Beijing, 1962), 36.1967, with its account of how Liu Xin (*fl.* 53 BC–AD 23) matched the *Zuozhuan* with the *Chunqiu* chronicle. See also Wai-yee Li in this volume.

States]—a text that includes many close parallels to the *Zuozhuan* and covers approximately the same era—distributes its material by place of occurrence. Another early text, no longer extant, is said to have paired *Zuozhuan* excerpts and later anecdotes in chapters titled 'Self-discipline and rightness', 'Terms of address and titles', 'Probing and touching', and 'Policy and strategy'.[14] The titles suggest some of the illustrative uses to which the categorized anecdotes might have been put if retold or cited in a speech or essay. Most collections of anecdotes from the Warring States, Qin, and Han adopt this mode of thematic arrangement, with only the *Zuozhuan* emphasizing temporal progression over the anecdotes' distinct didactic value.

Other sources from the middle and late Warring States period—texts that are not so unusual in presentation as the annalistic *Zuozhuan*—reflect the primary function of the anecdote more directly. First, in the rare instances where writers offer extended reflections on the problems and techniques of oratory, they make a place for the citation of historical material, citation that—by the example of myriad recreated speeches—could only have taken the form of anecdotes or abbreviated title-references. The *Xunzi* chapter 'Against Physiognomy' notes that the difficulty in persuading consists of leading the worst practitioners of governance to the best models:

One cannot arrive there directly, yet if one cites examples from the distant past one must worry about a poor fit, while if one cites examples from nearer times one must worry about being common. Faced with this choice, the expert is certain to cite examples from the distant past that are not a poor fit and to cite examples from nearer times that are not common.[15]

Han Feizi, said to have been a student of Xunzi's, went much further in his theorizing about oratory, devoting two chapters to psychological and verbal considerations that bring success. The theory necessarily makes a place for the habit of anecdotal citation:

The reasons why I regard speaking as difficult are the following. . . . If (the speech) has many words and abundant citations, and if it links kinds and draws comparisons among things, then it will seem empty and useless. . . . If one cites the *Shi* and the *Shu* time and again, making a path and law of the ancient past, then one appears like a reciter. This is why I, your servant Fei, regard speaking as difficult and consider it a grave problem.[16]

The word *cheng* ('to cite'), used by both writers, encompasses quotation of material like the *Shijing* and *Shangshu*, the mention of such works, and the retelling or mention of historical material. Han Feizi's reference to the linking of kinds

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[14] *Shiji* (Beijing, 1959), 76.2375.   [15] *Xunzi jijie*, i. 84–5 ('Fei xiang').
[16] *Han Feizi jishi*, ann. Chen Qiyou, 2 vols. (Shanghai, 1974), i. 48–9 ('Nan yan'). The other *Han Feizi* text on oratory is the 'Shui nan' (i. 221–37).

and the drawing of comparisons is also suggestive, since as our discussion of the 'Problematizing' chapters will show, anecdotal citation depends upon the discovery of convincing historical analogies.

A second indication of the function of anecdotal narrative is the nature of the anecdote collections that were made and circulated starting in the fourth century BC. The *Zuozhuan* was one of these, as noted, and the *Mencius* might be counted another. But both—the former, with its chronological ordering, and the latter, with its focus on the speeches and conversations of a single persuader, Meng Ke (fourth century BC)—tend to obscure the citational value of anecdotes, or in the case of the *Mencius*, to narrow their didactic range to one well-defined set of lessons. A collection that better reflects the oratorical function of the anecdote is the *Han Feizi*'s set of 'Stockpiled Persuasions' (*Chu shui*) chapters.

Both the contents and the ordering of the 'Stockpiled Persuasions' make them singularly useful for the speaker or writer who seeks to call history to witness. In its current presentation, the collection is divided into six sections: the two 'Inner' chapters (upper and lower) and the four 'Outer' chapters (left and right, each subdivided into upper and lower). Within each chapter, summary paragraphs, serving as more or less intricate tables of contents, list didactic lessons and guide users directly to the anecdotes that illustrate these lessons. For instance, the first of the chapters opens with the following: 'The techniques used by the ruler are seven; the subtleties examined by him are six. The seven techniques: the first is comparing and observing among the many points of departure…'.[17] Directly following this summary enumeration of seven techniques, the text offers a paragraph for each of them:

If in observing and listening one does not compare, then genuine facts will not be heard; when for listening there are gateways and doors, then subjects will block and obstruct them. The explanation for this lies in the dwarf's dreaming of the stove and in Lord Ai's citing the saying 'Never in a crowd does one lose one's way.' Thus that the men of Qi saw the Yellow River Lord accords with Master Hui's speaking of 'not having half.' The trouble with this is apparent in the Page Niu's starvation of Shusun and in Jiang Yi's explanation of Jing custom. The succeeding ruler wanted to govern but did not know how and therefore caused there to be rivals. For this reason the clear-sighted ruler extends the analogy of accumulated iron and inquires into the trouble of the one market.[18]

There follow similarly enigmatic paragraphs for each of the remaining six techniques.

Next, the text provides 'explanations' (*shuo*)—the largely anecdotal keys to the succinct references given in the opening paragraphs. 'Explanations one', for example, contains ten separate paragraphs, nine of them anecdotes, two of them slightly variant versions of the Lord Ai anecdote. The first anecdote, for example, tells how a dwarf spoke slyly against the excessive favour the lord of Wei was

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[17] Ibid., i. 516 ('Nei chushui shang'). [18] Ibid., i. 518 ('Nei chushui shang').

showing one of his ministers: normally when one is about to visit the ruler, says the dwarf, one dreams of the sun, which warms everyone; that he dreamt of a stove instead indicates that the ruler must be giving his warmth to only one man.[19] After the remaining explanations for the first paragraph of epitomes, the text goes on to the second paragraph, completing the whole set of seven terms. The 'six subtleties' are dealt with in the same order of epitomes and explanations in the next of the 'Stockpiled Persuasions' chapters. The other chapters are not in every case as tightly structured as these, but all do provide categorized material for argumentation on a host of points related to statecraft.

Why is it to be suspected that these chapters were designed for the help of orators and essayists, and not only as an expression, in unaccustomed form, of the author's own views? The structure of succinct epitomes followed by expansions suggests a practical application, with the opening paragraphs serving to help users of the text find the material they need. The practice of speakers and essayists, including Xunzi and Han Feizi, shows that in argumentation historical anecdotes were regularly built into explanations, not simply listed or categorized. The word for 'explanation' and the word for 'persuasion' are written with the same graph, and each of the illustrative anecdotes is ready-made as for use in a persuasion. Finally, the concentration of core material, with explanatory material appended, is found in a number of other early texts, including the silk manuscripts found at Mawangdui, and the Neo-Mohist chapters on logic; in both of these latter works the core material is designated 'classic' (*jing*).[20] This material could serve as basic curriculum, very possibly meant for memorization by students, who would find categorized lists especially useful.

If the *Han Feizi* chapters were indeed designed as a resource for orators and essayists, then it should not surprise us to discover a larger set of similar collections, with similar qualities and applications, that would likewise have served only very poorly as sources of historical knowledge. These collections were often arranged according to a unifying theme of one sort or another. The theme might be an individual thinker or teacher, as in the case of *Yanzi chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals of Master Yan], the *Mencius*, and parts of many other philosophical works.[21] The theme might be a famous story cycle, as in the *Wu Yue chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yue], which collects much of the lore from the early fifth-century BC conflict between those two south-eastern states. The theme might be a particular approach to traditional learning, as in the case of the *Hanshi waizhuan* [Outer Tradition for the Han Shijing], which

[19] Ibid., i. 526–7 ('Nei chushui shang').
[20] A. C. Graham outlines the structure of the Later Mohist chapters in *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle, Ill., 1989), 137–8; for the Mawangdui text, see Pang Pu, *Zhubo 'Wuxing' pian jiaozhu ji yanjiu* (Taipei, 2000).
[21] Accounts of these texts and others mentioned here are available in Michael Loewe (ed.), *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley, 1993).

ingeniously matches hundreds of anecdotes with epitomizing tags drawn from the *Shijing*, as interpreted by the Han line in *Shijing* learning.

The urge to put anecdotal lore in some kind of order seems to have warred with a drive simply to capture the information and make it available to new users. An exemplary collector was Liu Xiang, who at the end of the Western Han served as Counsellor of the Palace, and devoted himself to the collation of the many bundles of bamboo texts that had found their way into the imperial archives. Several of Liu's works were definitive collections of the materials relating to famous teachers: our *Xunzi*, our *Guanzi*, and a number of other works that we now read as philosophy derive from his collation work.[22] But his labours also yielded materials for two anecdote collections, the *Shuoyuan* [Garden of Discourse] and the *Xinxu* [New Ordering]. The two collections introduce some categorical order into the mass of anecdotes; the *Shuoyuan* has twenty chapters devoted to such matters as 'The Way of the Ruler' (*Jun dao*) and 'The Techniques of the Subject' (*Chen shu*), and the *Xinxu* has chapters on 'Critiquing Luxury' (*Ci she*) and 'Men of Principle' (*Jie shi*), but both also include chapters labelled 'miscellaneous' (*za*). The collections have exceedingly little in the way of connective material among anecdotes and chapters; they are far looser and far less philosophically focused than even the *Han Feizi* chapters, but are easily as valuable as sources of illustrative material.

Finally, Liu Xiang also oversaw the compilation of the *Zhanguoce* [Stratagems of the Warring States]—a massive compendium of court schemes and interstate manipulations set in the Warring States period. More than any other collection, the *Zhanguoce* shows its nature as a manual for effective speech. Like the *Guoyu*, its contents are categorized geographically, according to the state in which an action was planned or carried out. Yet the anecdotes within a single section almost never produce a meaningful historical sequence or tell a complete story. Although, like other anecdote collections, the *Zhanguoce* usually specifies the actors in an event, it often enough leaves only a pronoun or a blank where we would expect a name, and in places gives multiple possible speeches for a single set situation, in the manner of Roman *suasoriae*.[23] Whatever little value the text might have had as a source for Warring States period history, the *Zhanguoce* was a superb set of samples for would-be speakers and schemers. The text is not a record, but a manual.

Two more works deserve mention here because of their special relation to anecdote collections of the kind we have been discussing. First, *Lüshi chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals of Mr Lü], compiled around 239 BC under the direction of the Qin Chancellor of State, Lü Buwei, is a splendidly ordered collection of essays, so carefully structured throughout and so comprehensive of

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[22] See ibid., 178, 246.
[23] J. I. Crump, *Intrigues: Studies of the Chan-Kuo Ts'e* (Ann Arbor, 1964), 96–109.

cosmological and philosophical knowledge that one scholar has called it 'encyclopaedic'. It consists in large part of brief essays thoroughly bolstered by anecdotal illustrations. Second, the *Shiji* [Records of the Scribe]—originally known as the *Taishigong shu* [Documents of the Grand Scribe] and authored mainly by Sima Qian—is as neatly constructed as *Lüshi chunqiu*, but within the majority of its chapters it adopts chronological sequence as the ordering principle for the anecdotes it collects, whether these be the anecdotes that make up the history of a dynastic reign, of a noble house, or of a biography. Where *Lüshi chunqiu* lies somewhere between anecdote collection and a collection of philosophical essays (like the ones Liu Xiang collated), the *Shiji*'s introduction of a temporal dimension transforms the anecdote collection into the prototype of every later Chinese dynastic history. The innovation redeemed much dubious lore by representing it as such; that is, as what was believed about a particular figure or event in the past and therefore as a snapshot of historical knowledge in Sima Qian's time. In this way it opened the way to testing orators' illustrations for their documentary value, and established a form and precedent for the recording of historical fact. The achievement is all the greater in that it is by no means clear that the *Zuozhuan* had assumed its annalistic form by the time Sima Qian was writing.

Gathered as they are in works from different times and places, categorized and ordered as they are according to the various criteria transcribers and compilers applied, embellished, or abbreviated as circumstances called for, the anecdotes as a complete corpus nonetheless have certain prevailing characteristics that are traces of their original uses. The didactic lessons of the anecdotes are by no means evenly distributed across the ideological spectrum, but cluster instead in territory that—to use anachronistic terms—could be characterized as 'Confucian' and 'Legalist'. In both these major clusters of anecdotes, plenty of attention is devoted to the excellent speaker, as one would expect of material transmitted by, and for, speakers. 'Daoist' texts, such as the *Zhuangzi*, make ample use of the anecdotal form, but make more use of fable than other texts do, and in general permit more fictional elaboration even when they do adopt quasi-historical frames.

The anecdotes that have the greatest historical plausibility relate almost exclusively to the propositions on political behaviour advanced either by tradition-oriented thinkers, predecessors of the later Confucians, or by their opponents. The traditionalists used their anecdotes to illustrate such notions as the importance of restraining the ruler's self-indulgence, heeding good advice, treating the people well, promoting good faith, and preserving ritual practices. Their critics, on the other hand, used anecdotes to illustrate the frailty of the traditional order and the manipulability of many of its assumptions, showing how personal sources of authority must be replaced by objective, rule-based systems, how honour and duty could not match reward and punishment as motivations, and how virtue foundered on self-deception and naivety. The reliance on historical illustration shown by thinkers favouring these viewpoints would make for a

disproportionate representation of their views in the understanding of history, once models of historical development started to come into being. But the emergence of such models would depend in part on the terms and techniques of critique introduced by the opponents of tradition. This mode of critique is best exemplified in the *Han Feizi.*

ANECDOTAL NARRATIVE AND PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE

In the character and use of the historical anecdote as outlined above, there is much that prefigures and supports philosophy. The narratives are informed by the lessons they convey, and in the mouths of advisers and teachers they would have done some of the work of philosophy long before anything like a separate discipline of philosophy began to emerge in China. Users' care in selecting and adapting a particular anecdote for its context would have required a degree of circumspection and reflection on the problem of illustration. But a philosophy that merely carried on in its reliance upon anecdotal demonstration, without turning its new critical powers upon its own method, could never rise above the prejudices of its favourite stories.

Traces of willing scepticism among traditional-minded thinkers have attracted more than their due share of attention. Mencius is supposed to have said 'It would be better to have no *Shangshu* [Venerated Documents] at all than to believe the *Shangshu* in their entirety', citing one transmitted chapter in which the violent actions of the Zhou founder offended his notions of humaneness.[24] But this is only a passing remark and amounts to a narrow-minded renunciation, not critique. The *Gongyang* commentary on the *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals]—a text said to have been transmitted orally into the Western Han and (like its shorter cousin the *Guliang* commentary) dedicated to the idea that Confucius had encoded in the wording of the *Chunqiu* his own judgements on history—notes at three points that the chronicle uses different sorts of language for what its authors had seen with their own eyes, what they had heard from elders, and what they had received from even older traditions.[25] This division suggests a good sensitivity to the varying reliability of information depending on age, particularly where oral transmission plays a part, but it does not make for a critical programme of any kind.

The most sustained philosophical critique of anecdotal narrative comes in a remarkable set of chapters in the *Han Feizi*—the four 'Problematizing' chapters. In the current ordering of the text, these chapters come directly after the six 'Stockpiled Persuasions' chapters. Whatever their presentation in early versions

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[24] *Mengzi zhengyi*, 2 vols. (Beijing, 1987), ii. 959 (*Mencius* 7B.3).
[25] *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhu shu*, in *Shisanjing zhushu fu jiaokan ji* (Beijing, 1980), 1.6 (Yin 1), 4.19 (Huan 2), 28.159 (Ai 14).

of the text, they would have read as an extension of the procedure of those chapters. Here, the consciousness required to categorize anecdotes and to present them in a pedagogically useful form, with introductory passages stating some of their principles, is turned upon the internal principles of the narratives, as identified and tested against the philosophical arguments advanced elsewhere in the *Han Feizi.* This work's treatment of anecdotes is thus both the pinnacle of historical argumentation and, in a sense, the undoing of it.

It stands to reason that this crisis should play out in the *Han Feizi* rather than any other work of the classical period. More systematically than any other surviving work, the *Han Feizi* lays out the advantages of a government built upon a clear hierarchy of offices, with duties rationally distributed and assigned, and the whole machine operated according to strict expectations and standards of performance. In this system, which transforms the vision of a ritually disciplined hierarchy propounded in the *Xunzi*, the work of Han Fei's purported teacher, the ruler need not trust in his inferiors' devotion to ritual propriety or traditional ways, but instead seeks to control them entirely through the promise of reward for good performance of duties and the threat of punishment for bad. Subjectivity and personal appeal are painstakingly excluded from power relations; lest he be manipulated by sycophants, the ruler is to keep his own tastes secret, relying entirely on the objective workings of the laws and statutes to further the interests of the state. Rhetoric is for the ruler to guard against, and for the minister and persuader to master as a secret art of psychological manipulation.

In its attitude toward the value of history as a precedent for present practice, the *Han Feizi* consolidates a kind of freedom won by earlier thinkers. The *Daodejing* [Classic of the Way and Virtue], also known as the *Laozi*, had challenged the notion that the Zhou-era virtues that were to form the mainstay of the Confucian ethical programme—humaneness, duty, ritual propriety, good faith, loyalty, and the like—were the flower of human achievement, and had instead presented cultural history as one long, disastrous falling-away from a state of nature. The work was well known to Han Fei, who devoted two chapters to interpreting passages from it in terms of his own views.[26] The *Mozi*, with its willingness to subject traditional practices and values to objective tests of utility, had won some space for arguments in favour of reform and conscious innovation.[27] The later Mohists, known for their unprecedentedly rigorous system of logic, had undermined a fundamental tenet of history-based argumentation by questioning the value of the sages. However great a ruler Yao was in his own time, in the changed and incomparably more complex circumstances of the

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[26] *Han Feizi jishi*, i. 326–86 ('Jie Lao'), 387–417 ('Yu Lao'). The latter chapter illustrates *Laozi* passages with anecdotes.
[27] See, for examples, the chapters on funerals and music: *Mozi jiaozhu*, ann. Wu Yujiang, 2 vols. (Beijing, 1993), i. 262–92 ('Jie sang'), 379–99 ('Fei yue').

present, he and his methods would be ineffectual.[28] The *Xunzi* itself had noted the problem of competition for limited resources and had held up the useful lessons of 'latter-day kings', but it never went so far as to hint that changing times might render the lessons of the sages irrelevant.[29] The *Han Feizi*, for its part, captured the demystification of antique precedent in a single cutting parable: there was once a man from Song, a territory legendary for its dimwits, who on capturing a hare that had dashed its brains out against a stump, sat down to wait for the happy accident to repeat itself.[30] For Han Fei, those who loved history for its applicable paradigms of government were forever waiting by the same stump.

In the four 'Problematizing' chapters, the *Han Feizi* systematically questions the lessons offered in twenty-seven historical anecdotes, many of them familiar to any reader of Warring States and Western Han collections. The lessons of these anecdotes are clustered around the themes favoured by supporters of tradition, and in every case Han Fei follows the anecdote with a paragraph, prefaced by 'Someone said' (*huo yue*), attacking the didactic lesson of the anecdote and often enough—by questioning assertions of cause and effect—undercutting the credibility of the story. Han Fei shared with several other thinkers a devotion to the impersonal 'disposition' or 'momentum' (*shi*) of a situation, and to the 'techniques' (*shu*) that a cold consideration of circumstances would necessitate. Where his grasp of reality does not straightaway dissolve the old story, he is skilled at turning the anecdotal art against itself.

In one of the anecdotes Han Fei addresses, Lord Ping of Jin asks his minister Shuxiang whether the famous Lord Huan of Qi won his successes through his own merit or owed them to the exertions of his subjects. Shuxiang attributes all to the efforts of the subjects, Guan Zhong and two others, whom he compares to the makers of a fine robe: the ruler's only part was to don it. The Music Preceptor Kuang, listening at his zither, dismisses this figure with a smile and corrects it with a pair of analogies. Since the chefs would never presume to force the ruler to eat a dish they had cooked, the proper figure for the relation of ruler and subjects is fertile land and the vegetation that grows upon it: all achievements spring from the ruler's excellence.

'Someone' regards both answers as 'skewed statements' (*pianci*). Achievements like Lord Huan's can result only from cooperation between ruler and subjects. In itself the answer is simple enough and seemingly obvious, but it is Han Fei's mastery of the available anecdotes that allows him to establish it decisively over the two 'skewed' answers. He first considers Shuxiang's answer. Two cases—that of Gong zhi Qi and that of a similar remonstrator in Cao—show that a ruler might fail, even with the best subjects. The fact that Gan could fall

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[28] Graham, Disputers of the Tao, 142.

[29] *Xunzi jijie*, i. 152 ('Wang zhi'), ii. 346 ('Li lun'), i. 79–81 ('Fei xiang').

[30] *Han Feizi jishi*, ii. 1040 ('Wu du').

while Jianshu was a subject there, while the same man's presence in Qin could raise that state to the hegemony, shows that what matters is the pairing of the right subject with the right ruler. It cannot be said, then, that only the subjects' contributions matter. Turning to Kuang's answer, Han Fei cites evidence to show that Lord Huan was a reprobate before he had the help of Guan Zhong and a sad failure after he lost him. Lord Wen of Jin, like Lord Huan the most powerful ruler of his era, likewise put aside his own fecklessness only with the help of a remonstrating minister, Jiu Fan. For this reason one cannot hold, as the preceptor does, that only the ruler's efforts count.[31]

The point is not in itself a difficult one. The interest lies in the unusual opportunity Han Fei has set up to array anecdotal precedents against each other. His broad knowledge of anecdotes and his virtuosity in bringing them to bear on the question at hand make for something very different from the usual habit of oratory, where (to judge from textual recreations) there is no immediate challenging of exempla. The effect more closely resembles the rare debating or the competitive drawing of distinctions (*bian*) that goes on in the *Mencius* when the teacher and an opponent vie over the correct analogy for human nature (*xing*).[32] The quick rhythm of historical references in the response, thrown up against the slow, straight narrative of the target anecdote, makes the latter and its lesson look naive and blinkered. A true thinker, this procedure implies, will reason through all anecdotes and believe none.

Although the *Han Feizi* shows the keenest awareness of the practical techniques of rhetoric, it often seems to look beyond them to a state in which the true ways of the world would be well known and serve openly as guides to human behaviour. The author of the 'Problematizing' chapters looks back dismissively at Confucius' technique of presenting his teachings differently to different audiences.[33] According to one anecdote, three rulers asked Confucius about governing (*zheng*), and Confucius answered each of them differently. To Lord She of Chu he said that it was a matter of keeping those near at hand happy, and encouraging people far away to come closer. To Lord Ai of Lu he said that it was a matter of selecting and employing worthy men. To Lord Jing of Qi he said that it was a matter of being frugal in expenditures. Finally, to his disciple Zigong, who asked about the discrepancies, he explained that each man needed the answer he had given him: Lord She needed to consolidate the people he ruled, Lord Ai needed to counterbalance the influence of the three hereditary nobles who controlled his court, and Lord Jing needed to rein in his extravagance.[34] Stories of this kind are not uncommon. It seems that admirers of Confucius prized, among other things,

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[31] Ibid., ii. 825–26.   [32] *Mengzi zhengyi*, ii. 732–42 (*Mencius* 6A.1–3).

[33] For an additional example of this technique, which is associated with Confucius more than with any other teacher, see *Analects* 11.22.

[34] *Han Feizi jishi*, ii. 852–53.

the pedagogical tact he showed in tailoring his teachings while preserving his central message on governance.

For Han Fei, however, the teachings are in any case false, and the act of tailoring a sign of their weakness. Lord She will not consolidate his people through kindness, which amounts to the improper use of rewards and punishments and indicates a 'lack of technique' (*wu shu*). He must use incentives properly and nip all insubordination in the bud. Since Lord Ai's predicament shows already that he cannot recognize the worthy, Confucius' advice might well cause him to choose even more destructive ministers. The ruler must not rely on subjective judgement of merit, but instead test the objective performance of ministers in their duties. Lord Jing's expenditures should not matter at all, as long as all his subjects and ministers exert themselves for him.

In each of the three sections of his response, Han Fei cites historical exempla that aptly undo Confucius' reasoning. Lord She might be as kind as he likes, but even under the sage Yao the subordinate (and future king) Shun could draw people away to himself. Lord Ai might choose for himself bogus worthies like Zizhi, who usurped the rule of Yan from a gullible ruler, or the Grand Steward Pi, who cut his king off from good counsel and brought down the state of Wu. Lord Huan of Qi was more extravagant than the legendary dynasty-ending rulers Jie and Zhou, yet his expenditures did not strain the state.[35]

Beyond rhetorical tactics and beyond the mess of historical exempla, which are so various that they might be cited to prove anything at all, there is a more stable truth. One answer would have sufficed, according to Han Fei:

With a single answer in response to the three lords, the three lords could have escaped trouble: and that would be 'Know your inferiors.' When one's knowledge of inferiors is clear, then one puts a stop to things while they are still minor; when one puts a stop to things while they are still minor, violations do not accumulate; when violations do not accumulate, there is no forming of cliques; when there is no forming of cliques, the lord's interest and private interests are clearly separated; when the lord's interest and private interests are clearly separated, then partisan bands are scattered; and when partisan bands are scattered, there is no trouble with being blocked and cut off beyond court and suffering the formation of cliques within court. When one's knowledge of one's inferiors is clear, then one's vision is pure and clean; when one's vision is pure and clean, one's punishments and rewards are clear; and when one's punishments and rewards are clear, then the state is not poor. Therefore it is said that the single response by which the three lords could have escaped trouble was 'Know your inferiors.'[36]

Although the logic of this summation is somewhat obscured by evident corruption in the text,[37] the approach is clear enough: asserting the single principle of 'knowing one's inferiors', Han Fei follows its implications up the social hierarchy from commoners to court, linking each effect to the next by the implied

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[35] Ibid., ii. 853–54.   [36] Ibid., ii. 854.

[37] See the note of Tao Hongqing (1859–1918) ibid., ii. 859–60.

inevitability of *sorites*, a classical rhetorical figure well suited to visions of political stability.[38] The paragraph amounts to a précis of Han Fei's political philosophy, with the single principle of superior knowledge dissolving each of Confucius' thin propositions in turn: the ruler's knowledge will make kindness irrelevant, prevent court intrigues, and keep the state wealthy.

Throughout the 'Problematizing' chapters, Han Fei's command of the anecdotal lore allows him to turn received knowledge against itself. With the exception of Confucius, who was widely enough known and respected to have inspired parodies of his teaching,[39] Han Fei's targets are teachers and rulers who elsewhere in early Chinese literature are treated with implicit respect. Lord Huan of Qi and his minister Guan Zhong; Shuxiang and Preceptor Kuang of Jin; the sages Yao and Shun; Yanzi of Qi; King Wen of Zhou; the great statesman Zichan of Zheng; the grandson of Confucius and famous teacher in his own right, Zisi: these and many others who regularly betoken virtue and good sense, here are remade as legends of bad policy. With the anecdotes and their heroes, many trite old lessons are likewise undone. Kindness, a partiality for worthies, and frugality are called into question, as are moral transformation, bold remonstrance, and noble humility: in short, the whole optimistic programme of governing through the personal example of a wise and teachable ruler. Some of the old terms for virtues, such as 'humaneness' (*ren*), and 'duty' (*yi*), are retained as valuable, though strictly recoded to accord with Han Fei's views.[40]

Between his general mustering of anecdotal knowledge against itself and his direct critique of revered figures and legendary deeds, Han Fei challenges any pious or innocent use of storytelling. The limited, instrumental value that he does recognize in storytelling requires a more rigorous art of analogy than most writers and artists practised, and he seems here to rule out the possibility that any anecdote could resist 'problematizing'. Just as his reasoning through the responses of Confucius to various rulers pushes past the personal tactics and local adjustments of the teacher and the ruler, his several critiques push past the narrative nature of truth. These chapters must surely be regarded as a record of one crucial moment in early Chinese intellectual history: a moment when, somewhat in the manner Eric Havelock envisioned for Plato, philosophy freed itself from the narrative medium in which teachings had formerly been conveyed, and created new means of establishing and testing truths.[41] What supersedes the muddled body of lore is Han Fei's unified, coherent vision of the political world and its functioning within the natural world—a vision that, for the purposes of political method, he calls 'technique' (*shu*) and, for its resonance with natural processes, he also calls 'the way' (*dao*).

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[38] See the famous *sorites* in the 'Great Learning' (*Da xue*) chapter of the *Liji*, in *Liji zhengyi,* in *Shisanjing zhushu*, 60.445.

[39] See for example, *Zhuangzi jishi*, ann. Guo Qingfan, 4 vols. (Beijing, 1961), i. 202–6.

[40] *Han Feizi jishi*, ii. 809–10, 821.

[41] Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), 201–10.

ANECDOTAL NARRATIVE AND MODELS OF HISTORY

Han Fei's was not the only 'technique' of government that enjoyed respect in the last centuries of the first millennium BC, and his 'way' was not the only way. The intellectual climate that made possible his reflections upon anecdotal vehicles of thought also favoured the rise of other new, comprehensive visions of governing methods, which like his own set themselves above or against historical precedent. Partly because it had been transmitted in the form of modular units—the anecdotal examples—and especially because the reflections of Han Fei and his contemporaries had demystified much of the most revered material, the stuff of history was especially malleable in China in these centuries, especially susceptible to reorganization around one or another principle of historical development. Under various circumstances, Chinese thinkers represented history as a series of rises followed by declines, as a long rise culminating in a new beginning, or as a cycle of two phases or five, succeeding one another regularly and interminably.

All of these models entailed a certain distance from the narrative substance of history, since only this distance would permit a broader perspective on the lore's implications. The model that stayed closest to the notions implicit in the anecdotes themselves was the model of history as a series of early rises followed by long periods of decline. When speakers in the *Zuozhuan* tell of the very distant past, they dwell on visions of cultural foundation and of civilization created and diffused by common ancestors.[42] They say that early rulers appointed the scions of virtuous lines to spread proper teachings within the realm, and expelled miscreants to the periphery, there to serve as bulwarks against the uncivilized forces beyond.[43] They say that early rulers designed elaborate administrative systems around the omens that marked their founding; when the ruler of a small far eastern state recounts this history, Confucius remarks how knowledge of ancient practice survives at the margins of civilization.[44] They tell how Chu, far away in the wilderness, rose from obscurity to power through service to the Zhou king.[45] The *Shangshu*'s accounts of Yao's and Shun's official appointments match this idea of a centred cultural conquest of backwardness.[46]

For every rise, according to this set of accounts, there was a fall. A virtuous and innovative ruler would make order of the world, and his lazy successors

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[42] A speech by the Master of the Rong non-sinitic group at *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, iii. 1005–7 (Xiang 14.1; 559 BC) includes the notion of common ancestry for the Rong and the inhabitants of the Central States.

[43] Ibid., ii. 633–42 (Wen 18.7; 609 BC).   [44] Ibid., iv. 1386–9 (Zhao 17.3; 525 BC).

[45] Ibid., ii. 731 (Xuan 12.2; 597 BC), iv. 1339 (Zhao 12.11; 530 BC).

[46] For translation, see Bernhard Karlgren, 'The Book of Documents', *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 22 (1950), 1–7.

would throw it into chaos. Only a few fragments tell of the reigns of the earliest sage kings, but a slightly denser body of legend recounts the rise of the Xia dynasty, its decline, the rise of the Shang to take its place, and the decline of the Shang in its turn. For the speakers of the *Zuozhuan* and for most early Chinese observers, the greatest example of the triumph of civilization over perversity was the Zhou conquest, prepared for under King Wen and completed under his sons, King Wu and the Duke of Zhou (Zhou Gong, eleventh century BC).[47] Until the rise of the Qin, this early Zhou moment served as a point of reference, the summit of political order, and history itself was largely a history of disintegration and moral decline. This vision of history is clear in many anecdotes.[48] It is also codified in the *Zuozhuan*'s annalistic ordering of its anecdotes, which foregrounds themes of disintegration and hopes for a renewal on the basis of ritual propriety (*li*).[49]

Han Fei and others did much to undo the nostalgic orientation that lay behind this view of history. While they did not adopt wholesale the *Laozi*'s view of history as a long fall into culture, they did seem to set aside the idea of the early Zhou as a source of best precedents. In their focus on the technical necessities of governance, they prepared for one Qin model of history: history as a long rise, through military and administrative challenges, to triumph and a new beginning.

It is easy to overstate Qin's violence toward the past. This was, after all, a government that established academicians (*boshi*) for traditional texts even as it curtailed their circulation outside of court.[50] But Qin rulers also took pains to signify their control over history.[51] The founding ruler famously chose to call himself 'the first emperor' (*shihuangdi*), in this way defying precedent, creating a new form of title, and anticipating a numbered succession of emperors to follow him.[52] A text that might be taken as representative of the Qin drive to comprehend and control the known world, *Lüshi chunqiu*, does catalogue anecdotal knowledge, but reduces it to a relatively weak exemplary function, while giving overall precedence, in the opening chapters of the work, to nature's seasonal cycles and their various correlative counterparts. Early Han texts associated with Huang-Lao ('Yellow Emperor and Laozi') thought took over some of the *Han Feizi*'s faith in technique and scepticism about the value of traditional stories, and in place of a conservative programme based on established practices,

[47] See for example, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, iii. 1193–5 (Xiang 31.13; 541 BC).
[48] Ibid., ii. 669–72 (Xuan 3.3; 606 BC), iv. 1234–7 (Zhao 3.3; 539 BC).
[49] See Yuri Pines, 722– *Foundations of Confucius Thought: Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period 453 B.C.E.* (Honolulu, 2002), 89–104.
[50] Martin Kern, The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation (New Haven, 2000), 183–96.
[51] When it was recommended in the Qin court that various works be burned, the only historical records to be preserved were Qin records; see *Shiji*, 6.255.
[52] Ibid., 6.236.

they urged methods resembling the *Han Feizi*'s, though tempered somewhat by a kindlier and more public role for the ruler.[53]

The rapid fall of the Qin made the vision of rise and triumph untenable, at least in its most confident version. What came in its place were cyclical models of historical development. *Lüshi chunqiu* had advanced the notion of a correlative cosmology, according to which Five Phases succeed one another in unvarying sequence, each in its turn offering the interpretive key to a whole collection of observed phenomena. This cycle operated not only in the annual succession of seasons, but in the dynastic cycle as well: the reign of the Yellow Emperor corresponded to earth, the Xia to wood, the Shang to metal, the Zhou to fire, and the coming dynasty, the Qin, to water.[54] In 221 BC, upon the founding of the Qin, the First Emperor duly recognized water as the underlying virtue of his dynasty, adopting its associated colour, black, for flags and robes, and introducing other correlative adjustments.[55] Han thinkers adopted this model for the successive phases of history and, in due time, under the reign of Emperor Wu, replaced water with earth as the phase characterizing their own dynasty. Further adjustments would follow.[56] Dong Zhongshu and other Han thinkers further discerned beneath the surface of dynastic history an alternation of the 'patterned' (*wen*) and the 'substantial' (*zhi*), with Xia typifying the former and Shang the latter.[57] Because these models associated changes in human history more closely with cosmic processes, they presumed the steps that Han Fei and others had taken to move beyond the traditional anecdotes' bias in favour of moral causation. Yet they also depended upon anecdotes, the stuff of history, as a distant background of substantiation for their theoretical abstractions.

CONCLUSION: LEGACIES OF THE ANECDOTE

As the Western Han court consolidated its power and established an educational programme for the promotion and testing of administrative talent, the free rhetorical exploitation of quasi-historical narration was left behind. The classics, and in particular the chronicles and the speeches attributed to the sage kings,

[53] Chun Zhang and Yu Feng, *The Four Political Treatises of the Yellow Emperor: Original Mawangdui Texts With Complete English Translations and an Introduction* (Honolulu, 1998), 52–6.

[54] *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi,* ann. Chen Qiyou, 2 vols. (Shanghai, 1984), i. 677; and Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 329.

[55] *Shiji*, 6.237–38.

[56] *Hanshu*, 25B.1270–71; and M. E. Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany, 1999), 356.

[57] *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng*, ann. Su Yu (Beijing, 1992), 204. Cf. *Shuoyuan jiaozheng*, ann. Xiang Zonglu (Beijing, 1987), 476–8.

were adopted as the foundation of correct historical knowledge, while precautions were taken against the dissemination of narratives that could be strategically useful or rhetorically forceful.[58] Meanwhile, circumstances contributed to tighter controls on the production and dissemination of historical knowledge of certain kinds. The invention of 'records of movements and repose' (*qi ju zhu*), or detailed notes on the emperor's daily activities, provided historians with sources where rumour might otherwise have ruled. The decision of Ban Gu to adopt for his own *Hanshu* an abbreviated version of the *Shiji*'s system of categorization set a pattern that would inform official dynastic histories down to the end of imperial times. The retrospective habit by which writers of a newly risen regime sought to document the important events and personages of the preceding era likewise became conventional.

Never would an official history match the openness of the *Shiji* to the anecdotal lore of talkers. The rise of 'history' proper in China did in some ways imply the delegitimization of history's others, including oratory, quasi-historical narration, and the free theorization on laws of historical development. But it is important to recognize that the art of the anecdote never disappeared in China and never quite lost its historical authority. Beyond the official histories there were always 'outer histories' (*waishi*) and 'undomesticated histories' (*yeshi*), far less constrained by sourcing and structure than their official cousins, and far more dependent upon the anecdote. Whole eras could be captured in anecdotes, as the early medieval period was in *Shishuo xinyu* [New Accounts of Tales of the World], by Liu Yiqing; whole realms beyond the mundane political world could be made widely credible, as they were in the many collections of 'tales of the strange' (*zhi guai*), all of them adopting the anecdotal form. For a long time after its earliest oratorical uses, and despite the philosophical challenges that sought to deprive it of its authority, the anecdote continued to serve as a primary medium through which Chinese readers came to know the world, its history, and its meaning.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

*c.*1000–600 BC	*Shangshu* and *Shijing* composed
770–256 BC	Eastern Zhou Dynasty
770–481 BC	Spring and Autumn Era
480–221 BC	Warring States Era
221–206 BC	Qin Dynasty
202 BC – AD 8	Western Han Dynasty

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[58] Especially telling is the refusal of the imperial court to grant a prince access to the *Shiji* and works of philosophers, on the grounds that they contained powerful stratagems and contradicted the teachings of the classics; see *Hanshu*, 80.3324–25.

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Chapter 17

Pre-Qin Annals

Wai-yee Li

CHUNQIU

The earliest extant systematic record of the past in the Chinese tradition is an annalistic account known as the *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals]. Spanning 242 years (722–481 BC),[1] during which period China was divided into many different states whose allegiance to the Zhou regime (*c.* eleventh century BC–256 BC) was intermittent and often merely theoretical, this account from the state of Lu chronicles events such as sacrifices, covenants, battles, intrigues, rebellions, accessions, marriages, formal interstate visits, and deaths of members of the ruling elite in Lu and secondarily, other states, as well as astronomical movements, and disasters such as fires, floods, droughts, and locust plagues. Arranged chronologically by the years of the reigns of twelve Lu rulers, these concise and sometimes cryptic entries, amounting to no more than 1,700 Chinese graphs, were probably compiled when the events took place or shortly thereafter, and some entries might have been transcriptions of interstate notifications. The information they yield is by and large reliable. Its astronomical observations, for example, have been confirmed as accurate.

Textual evidence suggests that the Lu annals had counterparts in other domains, and some of them were also called *Chunqiu*, or perhaps 'Chunqiu' is simply a generic term for annalistic records (though the received text bearing that title never uses the term). Mencius (fourth century BC) lists the *Sheng* [Vehicle] of Jin and the *Taowu* (the name of a mythical beast) of Chu as counterparts of the *Chunqiu* of Lu.[2] Mozi (*c.* fourth century BC) refers to '*Chunqiu* from numerous states'.[3] Eponymous annalistic records seem to have been sought by envoys during interstate visits, and were considered important in the education of

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[1] The *Chunqiu* embedded in the *Zuozhuan* (see below) goes on for two more years, until 479 BC.

[2] *Mengzi*, 8.21.

[3] 'Numerous' is literally 'a hundred'. This line is not in the received text of *Mozi* but is cited in the *Sui shu* [Sui History] (Beijing, 1973), *c.* seventh century, 42.1197, and in Liu Zhiji (661–721), ed. Pu Qilong (*c.*1679–*c.*1762), *Shitong tongshi* (Taipei, 1988), 1.4. Modern editions list this in the 'lost

0 100 200 300 400 miles

0 200 400 600 km

Xiongnu Tribes

Dai

Liaoxi

Liaodong

Taiyuan

YAN

Changshan

Gulf of Bohai

Jibei

Jiaodong

Ho

Ho

Ji'nan

Zichuan

Ho

Di

QI

Jiaoxi

ZHAO

LU

WEI

Yin

Langya

Yellow Sea

Yong

QIN

Western Chu

Sai

Henan

Liang

HANN

Han

CHU

Huainan

WU

Shu

Jiujiang

Chiang

Ba

Linjiang

YUE

Chiang

Changsha

Min-Yue

Hengshan

Cassia Forest

Southern Yue
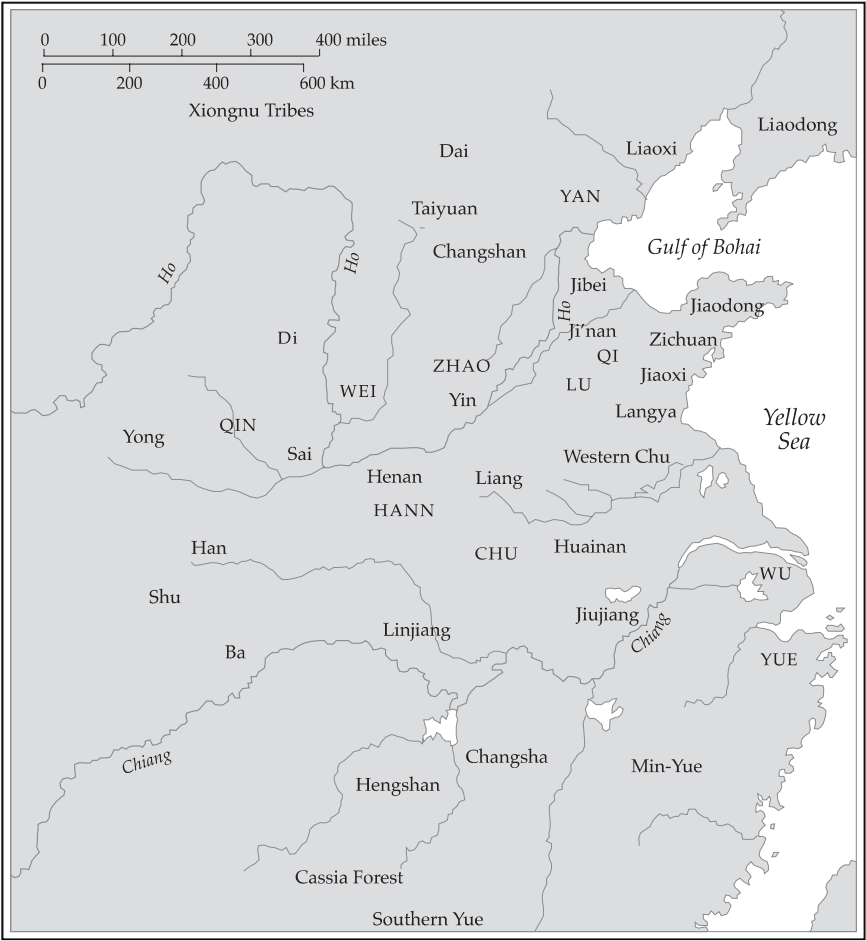
China 350 BC.

princes.[4] Ancient texts (probably buried *c.* 300 BC) excavated from a tomb around AD 279 included a Jin chronicle, the *Zhushu jinian* (Bamboo Annals), which is similar in format to the *Chunqiu* and still survives in fragments, as well as another work (now lost) that refers to texts also entitled *Chunqiu* chronicling events from earlier dynasties and other states.[5] From about the third century BC on, the name comes to be associated also with commentary traditions based on the *Chunqiu*, as well as writings that use historical examples to draw political and moral lessons, such as those linked to ministers from the late Warring States era and the early Han dynasty, including Yan Ying, Yu Qing, Li Kui, Lü Buwei, and Lu Jia.[6]

The name 'Chunqiu' announces a temporal framework based on seasonal changes (as one may expect of an agrarian society), and is probably derived from a dating convention that often mentions the season before the month, although some traditional commentators have characteristically invested the seasons with symbolic meanings as metaphors for 'coming into being' and 'fruition',[7] or praise and blame, rewards and punishments.[8] Another tradition maintains that Confucius started compiling the text in spring and finished in autumn, hence the name.[9] Such interpretive choices, in turn, spring from the belief that everything

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text' section. See Zhang Chunyi, *Mozi jijie* (Chengdu, 1988), 'Yiwen', 563. Another chapter on ghosts ('Ming gui') cites stories of vengeful ghosts from 'Springs and Autumns' from Zhou, Yan, and Song (*Mozi jijie*, 199–206). The complex plots suggest affinities with Warring States texts such as the *Zuozhuan* or *Guoyu* [Discourses of the States] rather than the extant *Chunqiu*.

[4] The Jin envoy Han Xuanzi sees the 'Lu *Chunqiu*' in the establishment of the Lu scribe and says, 'The rituals of Zhou are all here in Lu. Only now do I comprehend the virtue of the Zhou Duke and the reasons for the rise of the Zhou', Yang Bojun (ed.), *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* (Beijing, 1990), 1227 (Zhao 2.1; I will usually cite Yang's edition of the *Zuozhuan* in the notes that follow). On the basis of this comment, some scholars believe that this text extends further back in time (to the early Zhou) and is different from the extant eponymous text. On the importance of princes being schooled in the *Chunqiu,* see *Guoyu* (*Discourses of the States*) (Shanghai, 1988), 'Jinyu' 7.9, 'Chuyu' 1.1.

[5] According to *Jizhong suoyu* [Miscellaneous Words from the Ji Tomb] (no longer extant), the *Xia-Yin chunqiu* chronicles the reign of the Shang (Yin) king Tai Ding (*c.* twelfth century BC), and the *Jin chunqiu* records the reign of Lord Xian of Jin. See *Shitong tongshi*, 1.3–4.

[6] In the 'Treatise on Classics and Other Writings' ('Yiwen zhi') in Ban Gu's *Hanshu* (Hong Kong, 1970), the first three are classified under 'Confucian school' (*Ru jia*), Lü Buwei's *Lüshi chunqiu* is classified as 'Miscellaneous School' (*Za jia*), and Lu Jia's *Chu Han chunqiu* as 'Springs and Autumns school' (*Chunqiu jia*), (30.1713–4, 1726–7, 1740). *Yushi chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals of Mr Yu (Yu Qing)], *Lishi chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals of Mr Li (Li Kui)], and the *Chu Han chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals of Chu and Han (Lu Jia)] are no longer extant.

[7] 'Spring is in the middle of Yang, and myriad things are born because of it; autumn is the middle of Yin, and myriad things come to fruition because of it', Liu Xin (50 BC–AD 23), *San tong li*, cited in *Hanshu*, 'Treatise on Mathematical Harmonics and Astronomy' ('Lüli zhi'), 21.979–80; and also cited in Kong Yingda's (574–648) subcommentary, *Gongyang zhuan zhushu*, 1.2a, in *Shisan jing zhushu* (Taipei, reprint of the 1815 edition), vol. 7. The Han scholar Jia Kui (30–101) linked this to the imperative of balance (*zhong*) in the ruler's actions: 'he takes his model from the middle of yin and yang', cited in Kong Yingda's subcommentary to Du Yu's (222–284) preface to the *Chunqiu*, *Zuozhuan*, 1.5a, in *Shisan jing zhushu*, vol. 6.

[8] 'Rewards were for spring and summer; punishments were for autumn and winter' (*Zuozhuan*, Xiang 26.10).

[9] *Chunqiu shuo*, cited in Kong Yingda's subcommentary in *Gongyang zhuan zhushu*, 1.2a.

about the *Chunqiu*, from its title, naming practices, and word choices, to inclusion or omission of details, are highly significant because of Confucius' role as its author or editor. That the period it covers comes to be known as the 'Spring and Autumn era' testifies to its pervasive influence. Periodization here is somewhat arbitrary: instead of 722–481 BC, arguably more decisive bracketing dates would be the move of the Zhou capital to Luoyang in 770 BC and the tripartite division of the once powerful state of Jin in the mid fifth century BC, which accounted for the emergence of three of the seven states during the era known as 'Warring States' (*c.* late fifth century–*c.* early third century).

Mencius famously declares:

The age was in decline and the proper way was in abeyance. Deviant words and violent acts arose. There were instances of subjects murdering their rulers and of sons murdering their fathers. Confucius was fearful and created the *Chunqiu*. The *Chunqiu* is about affairs concerning the son of heaven [the Zhou king]. That is why Confucius said, 'Those who know me must do so only through the *Chunqiu*! Those who castigate me must do so only through the *Chunqiu*!'[10]

The word 'create' (*zuo*) in early texts encompasses ideas of 'fashioning' or 'editing' (*xiu*), as distinct from modern notions of authorship. Thus, commentary traditions of the *Chunqiu* allude to Confucius as judge and editor of the Lu annals, and the Han historian Sima Qian claims that Confucius 'followed the historical records and created the *Chunqiu*'.[11] The moral authority of judgements embedded in historical records takes the place of political authority invested in an idealized Zhou order in Mencius' vision: 'When the traces of sage-kings wane, the *Shijing* (Classic of Poetry) fades away. The *Shijing* fades away and then the *Chunqiu* is created.'[12] Confucius' fear of deviance is transformed into his power to instil fear among the deviant through stringent moral judgement on the past, thereby making meaningful what might have been 'mere records'. The connection between Confucius and the *Chunqiu*, integral to his canonization, answers the need to equate him with moral principles articulated through an historical vision affirming the primacy of the early Zhou political order. Moral judgements acquire concreteness and precision through historical instantiation.

Other Warring States thinkers, while not explicitly identifying Confucius as the author or editor of the *Chunqiu*, regard the text as one of the canonical classics.[13] Even modern scholars, sceptical of Confucius' role as author or editor of

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[10] *Mengzi*, 6.9.

[11] Sima Qian, *Shiji*, with commentaries by Pei Yin, Zhang Shoujie, and Sima Zhen (Beijing, 1964), 47.1943.

[12] *Mengzi*, 8.21.

[13] See Liang Qixiong, *Xunzi jianshi* (Taipei, 1993 [1963]), 'Quan xue', 7–8, 'Ru xiao', 86; and Qian Mu, *Zhuangzi zuanjian* (Hong Kong, n.d.), 'Qiwu lun', 18, 'Tian yun', 121, 'Tianxia', 270. In the last two cases, however, some commentators suspect Han interpolations or misidentification of commentary as text.

the text, concede its importance in education and pedagogy during the formative period of the Confucian tradition.[14] Traditionally the word used most often to characterize the *Chunqiu* is 'subtle' (*wei*): its sparse language is said to convey fundamental principles (*weiyan dayi*). The text indeed displays a high level of stylistic precision and consistency that supports the sense of system. For example, a Lu ruler is referred to as 'the lord' (*gong*) and as 'our ruler' (*wojun*), with his posthumous honorific, on the occasion of his funeral (if the funeral is recorded). Rulers of Chu and Wu, who styled themselves 'kings' (*wang*), are called 'leaders' (*ren*) or 'chiefs' (*zi*), one of the lower noble ranks, in the text. The assassination of a ruler is described with the word *shi*, which indicates the violation of hierarchy, except for Lu rulers whose murder is cloaked behind the word 'expire' (*hong*), and murdered rulers from other states are simply reported to have 'died' (*zu*).[15] Words associated with military conflicts, such as 'battle' (*zhan*), 'defeat' (*bai*), 'overcome' (*ke*), 'suffer a total defeat' (*baiji*), 'invade' (*qin*), 'surprise attack' (*xi*), 'attack' (*fa*), 'punish' (*tao*), 'enter' (*ru*), 'seize' (*huo*), 'lay siege to' (*wei*), or 'extinguish' (*mie*), seem to have precise designations, and imply evaluation of the justice or appropriateness of military operations. When Lu is defeated in battles, the words 'suffer a total defeat' are not used (with one exception). As these examples show, many 'rules' can be deduced, but few are absolutely consistent.

Later interpretations translate stylistic conventions and even textual corruption of the *Chunqiu* into markers of the sage's intention. When seasons and months stand alone without accompanying events, some commentators, instead of acknowledging textual problems, argue that the first month of the season has to be marked because of annalistic convention.[16] In one case, a missing word is construed as deliberate expression of doubt.[17] Designating Chu and Wu rulers, who called themselves kings, as 'chiefs' is thought to convey critique of the overreaching ambitions of 'barbarians', and set normative standards for 'rectifying names', so that names correspond to roles and functions.[18] References to burials of Chu and Wu rulers are omitted, supposedly to avoid using the title of 'king'.[19] Concealing a Lu ruler's murder, which might have simply reflected the wording of official notifications to other states (*cong fu*, *cong gao*), especially if we consider the new ruler's frequent role as perpetrator, is said to reflect Confucius' choice of 'concealment in internal matters' (*neihui*). 'To conceal the truth' (*hui*) to honour or protect one's kin or ruler[20] in turn implies that 'bare facts' should yield pride of

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[14] Yang Bojun, 'Introduction', in id. (ed.), *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*.

[15] See the *Chunqiu* Yin 11.4, Huan 18.2, Min 2.3, in Yang Bojun, 14, 151, 261. The word 'die' (*zu*) instead of the customary *hong* is used for Ziban, who ruled for two months in 662 BC before being murdered.

[16] This 'principle' is inconsistently observed in the *Chunqiu*.

[17] See the *Guliang* commentary on the words 'Summer fifth' in Huan 14.3, in *Guliang zhuan*, 4.8a, in *Shisan jing zhushu*, 7.

[18] *Shiji*, 47.1943.   [19] *Gongyang* commentary, Xuan 18.

[20] The *Gongyang* and *Guliang* traditions develop elaborate systems of 'concealment' (*hui*): the categories to be protected include one's kin (*qin*), one's domain (*nei*), those in a position of honour

place to normative human relations in historical records. Reverence for the *Chunqiu* as the sage's moral judgements was pervasive, but there have always been dissenters. The Tang scholar and thinker Liu Zhiji casts doubts on the sacrosanct text by examining its inconsistencies. The Song scholar-poet-reformer Wang Anshi (1021–86), with typical boldness, characterizes the *Chunqiu* as 'corrupt and fragmentary court announcements'. It was not until the twentieth century, however, that scepticism regarding subtly worded 'praise and blame' and the tie between Confucius and the *Chunqiu* became widespread. Even so, some scholars, especially defenders of the Confucian tradition, continue to uphold the attribution.

FROM ANNALS TO CANON

The distance between the terse verbal surface of the *Chunqiu* and its presumed profound meanings justifies the existence of commentaries. In the 'Treatise on Classics and Other Writings' in the *Hanshu* [History of the Han], Ban Gu lists *Zuo*, *Gongyang*, *Guliang*, *Zou*, and *Jia* as the commentary traditions in the 'School of Spring and Autumn Annals' (*Chunqiu jia*). The *Zuozhuan* [Zuo Tradition], transmitted in various archaic pre-Han scripts,[21] is dated earlier than the other four, which according to Ban Gu thrived when 'oral exegesis held sway' (*koushuo liuxing*). The *Zou* and *Jia* 'had no written texts'. The *Gongyang* and *Guliang* traditions, transmitted in the Han or so-called clerical script, both claim to trace their genealogies through generations of masters to Confucius' disciple Zixia. *Gongyang* may date to the late Warring States, although it was not written down until second century BC. *Guliang*, apparently modelled on the *Gongyang* although eager to demarcate its difference from the latter, was committed to writing later, possibly around the first century BC. Both betray their oral provenance through the catechismic question-and-answer format and the pedagogical mode which involves frequent quotations from earlier masters. Despite the preponderance of exegetical passages bent on extracting (or rather creatively constructing) a normative system from the sage's intention of praise and blame, both contain longer narratives elaborating the contexts for laconic entries in the *Chunqiu*. The same duality of exegesis and narrative obtains in *Zuozhuan*, only the proportion is reversed—comparatively brief exegetical comments are interspersed in a rich tapestry of narratives of varying lengths and structures.

   Of the three commentary traditions, *Zuozhuan* is the longest, most complex, and most important for the development of the idea of history in the Chinese

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(*zun*), sagely men (*xian*), and the central states (*zhongguo*) (regarding its relationship with 'barbarians'). The *Zuo* tradition uses the term much more sparingly—primarily in relation to Lu rulers.

   [21] Before Qin imposed the so-called seal script upon unifying China in 221 BC, other states used various kinds of archaic script. See Wang Guowei (1877–1927), *Guantang jilin* (Shanghai, 1992), *juan* 7.

tradition. Its exegetical relationship to the *Chunqiu* is also the most open to question. It was *Gongyang*, however, that reigned pre-eminent as official learning during the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220). When Emperor Wu (r. 141–87 BC) decreed in 136 BC that court Academicians had to be specialists in the Five Classics, *Gongyang* was the recognized exegetical tradition of the *Chunqiu*.[22] It achieved that status primarily because its proponents served the interests of the newly unified state, and they were often, in turn, rewarded with distinguished official careers. This apparent symbiosis of politics and history-based learning, however, is not totally symmetrical, as evinced by the *Gongyang* scholar Dong Zhongshu's brush with the law (he was sentenced to die but gained reprieve) when his doctrines were perceived as challenging imperial power.[23]

The word canon (*jing*) in Chinese is etymologically related to the warp threads in weaving, and summons associations with constant and fundamental precepts. *Gongyang* exegesis, which is a product of, as well as an agent in, the canonization of the *Chunqiu*, turns a somewhat arbitrary 'slice' of annalistic record into a purposeful plot whose shape, beginning, and ending have profound meanings. The first line of the *Chunqiu* reads: 'First year, spring, the king's first month.' The *Gongyang* tradition gives this explanation:

Why 'first year'? This was the beginning year of the ruler (Lord Yin of Lu). Why 'spring'? This was the beginning of the year. What does 'the king' refer to? It refers to King Wen. Why does the text first say 'king' and only later say 'first month'? It was the king's first month [it was the first month according to the Zhou king's calendar]. Why does it say 'the king's first month'? To laud unity and cohesion.'[24]

According to tradition, after the Zhou conquest of Shang (c. eleventh century BC), sacrifices for the latter lineage, as well as an even earlier dynasty, Xia, continued to be maintained, and calendrical systems traceable to the Xia, Shang, and Zhou were simultaneously used during the Spring and Autumn era. 'The king's first month' thus simply makes clear that this was the first month according to the Zhou calendar. *Gongyang* turns this into a special tribute to King Wen who, together with his son King Wu, are remembered as sage rulers and founders of an ideal political order, the unified and cohesive Zhou 'dynasty', whose power is buttressed by moral authority. (Historians now agree that this is an idealized past with little evidential basis.) The *Chunqiu* is thus said to articulate a vision rectifying names, honouring Zhou kings, castigating barbarians, and upholding familial and political hierarchies.

The *Gongyang* tradition pays special tribute to Lord Huan of Qi (685–643 BC), the overlord among states, and it also contains Qi dialect words, which may

[22] The Five Classics refer to the *Shijing* [Classic of Poetry], the *Shangshu* [Venerated Documents], the *Li* [Rites], the *Yijing* [Classic of Changes], and the *Chunqiu*. On their histories and ideologies, see Michael Nylan, *The Five 'Confucian' Classics* (New Haven, 2001).
[23] On Dong Zhongshu and *Chunqiu* exegesis, see Sarah Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn According to Dong Zhongshu* (Cambridge, 1996).
[24] *Gongyang zhuan*, 1.5a–9a, in *Shisan jing zhushu*, 7.

confirm its association with the region of Qi (present-day Shandong). *Gongyang* exegesis also implies the parallel between Zhou order and the newly unified empire. Dong Zhongshu further extends the idea of 'unity and cohesion' to the realm of thought, and memorializes the throne on the importance of honouring the Confucian tradition while stamping out heterodox views.[25]

The *Gongyang* tradition divides the *Chunqiu* into three eras from the perspective of the putative author Confucius' chronological distance from the events recorded: what he saw, what he heard about, and what he came to hear about through transmitted records. The *Gongyang* master He Xiu (129–82) maps this relatively straightforward explanation for 'different phrasings' (*yici*) in these three eras onto an historical vision of progress from 'the era of chaos' to 'the era of approaching peace' and 'the era of great peace',[26] when the scope of the sage's vision would extend from Lu to the central states and finally to 'all under heaven', including acculturated barbarians.[27] This is all the more astounding because the period covered by the *Chunqiu* is marked by intensifying conflicts, declining authority or extinction for the ruling houses and aristocratic lineages, and increasing violence and disorder that take us to the Warring States. In doing so, He Xiu is conflating history as past records with history as blueprint for the future. Han hagiography of Confucius credits him with foreknowledge: he is supposed to envision an approaching era of peace and unity (as represented by the Han dynasty) even as he chronicles failures and decline. In this fundamentally ahistorical view, the *Chunqiu* embodies immutable truths, and enunciates a vision of the progressive fulfilment of ideal government. It is perhaps not surprising that the late Qing reformer Kang Youwei (1858–1929) should look to such *Gongyang* theories for inspiration.

The *Chunqiu* in the *Gongyang* and *Guliang* traditions ends with the capture of the *lin* in 481 BC, the fourteenth year of Lord Ai of Lu (r. 494–463 BC). The *lin* is a strange and unclassifiable animal. In the lexicographical work *Erya*, the *lin* is said to have 'the body of an antelope, the tail of an ox, and one horn'. *Gongyang* exegesis turns this ending into a paradoxical combination of decline and progress, despair and joy:

The *lin* is a benevolent animal. When there are sage kings it comes, when there are no sage kings it does not come. Someone reported, 'There is an antelope with horns.' Confucius said, 'For whom did it come? For whom did it come?' He turned his sleeves and wiped his face; tears wet his robe. . . . A *lin* was captured during hunting in the West. Confucius said, 'My Way is coming to an end!' . . . Then why does the noble man create the *Chunqiu*? For sweeping away an era of disorder and returning it to rectitude, none

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[25] *Hanshu*, 56.2522.

[26] The translation of these terms, *juluan shi*, *shengping shi*, and *taiping shi*, follows Nylan, *The Five 'Confucian' Classics*, 303. He Xiu's theory is in turn derived from the chapter 'Chu Zhuang wang' in Dong Zhongshu's *Chunqiu fanlu*.

[27] He Xiu, *Gongyang zhuan*, 23a–23b.

surpasses the *Chunqiu*. . . . Does he not in the end delight in (a latter-day) Yao or Shun knowing the noble man? He establishes the meanings of the *Chunqiu* to await later sages.

The somewhat incongruous combination of Confucius' grief and delight in this passage prompts generations of *Gongyang* scholars to identify polarities that can justify conflicting emotions. Dong Zhongshu, while acknowledging Confucius' failure to implement his vision, identifies him as the 'new king' (*xinwang*) who defines his laws in the *Chunqiu*. The auspicious sign (*furui*) that confers the kingly mandate on him to create a new moral–metaphysical system is the *lin*. He Xiu opines that Confucius weeps because he can foresee the long Warring States era of carnage and suffering before the rise of the Han,[28] and Confucius laments that his Way is coming to an end because 'Heaven had given the Master the omen of his imminent demise'.[29] He also states explicitly that 'the later sages' refers to Han rulers, and that the *Chunqiu* lays down principles of government for the Han dynasty (*wei Han zhifa*).[30]

The *Guliang* did not gain recognition in the Imperial Academy until the reign of Emperor Xuan. In method and tone very similar to the *Gongyang*, it also overlaps with the latter in about 20 to 30 per cent of its text. The fact that it sometimes seems to be arguing with the *Gongyang* indicates its later date. More than the *Gongyang*, the *Guliang* seems passionately interested in ritual matters, and is quick to divine deviations from propriety, even when there is no apparent justification. It repeatedly notes, for example, that a married woman should not cross the boundaries of the domain into which she has entered as wife. A noble-woman burnt to death because she refuses to leave the palace unaccompanied is praised for adhering to 'the proper way for women'. (The *Gongyang* also praises her, albeit less effusively, but the *Zuozhuan* criticizes her for misunderstanding standards for ritually proper conduct.)

As if to outdo the *Gongyang*, the *Guliang* sometimes professes even more stringent (or unforgiving) judgements by probing intentions and considering consequences. For example, the accession of Lord Yin of Lu (r. 722–712 BC), with whose reign the *Chunqiu* begins, is not recorded in the text. The *Zuozhuan* points out that this was because Lord Yin was acting as regent, and implies that there was no accession ceremony to record. The *Gongyang* claims that this is 'to honour Lord Yin's intention' of eventually yielding the throne to his younger brother (later Lord Huan (r. 711–694 BC)). The *Guliang* regards the omission as criticism of Lord Yin—his 'trivial favour' is misguided: he merely confirms his father's error of preferring a younger son (Yin 1). (Suspicious of Lord Yin's intention, Lord Huan is behind his assassination in 712 BC.) In another case, while the *Gongyang* praises a minister for acting expediently, the *Guliang* condemns him for flouting the hierarchy of ruler and subject (Huan 11). However, neither in Han nor in

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[28] *Gongyang zhuan*, 28.10a.   [29] Ibid., 28.11b.   [30] Ibid., 28.18a.

later periods did the *Guliang* achieve the same influence as the *Gongyang*, perhaps because its specific judgements—like the *Gongyang* it tries to demonstrate how almost every word in the *Chunqiu* conveys praise and blame—are not grounded in a more ambitious vision of the shape of history as it may impinge on the present and the future.

BETWEEN CANON AND HISTORY

Like the *Gongyang* and *Guliang*, the *Zuozhuan* has its share of exegetical passages seeking to derive a normative moral–political system from the *Chunqiu*. However, as mentioned earlier, the preponderance of narrative and rhetorical passages in the *Zuozhuan* distinguishes it from the other two received traditions. Many *Zuozhuan* passages have no corresponding entries in the *Chunqiu*, a good portion of the latter text has no *Zuozhuan* exegesis, and the *Zuozhuan* covers events until 468 BC, thirteen years after the capture of the *lin* in 481 BC with which the *Chunqiu* in the *Gongyang* and *Guliang* conclude.[31] All these issues have raised doubts on the exact relationship between the *Zuozhuan* and the *Chunqiu*. Is the *Zuozhuan* a commentary motivated by a broader idea of exegesis that includes narrative elaboration and supplementary information? Is it made up of materials taken from separate 'histories of states' (*guoshi*)? Is it an amalgamation of other Warring States texts that have nothing to do with the *Chunqiu*? Was an 'urtext' based on different premises rearranged to fit the chronological arrangement of the *Chunqiu*?

We may never have definitive answers for these questions. Much more tangible are the implications for the idea of history once the *Zuozhuan* is accepted as an exegetical tradition of the *Chunqiu*. That process started with Sima Qian's assertion that the Lu gentleman Zuo Qiuming, fearful that Confucius' disciples, each following his own inclination while orally transmitting and elaborating the teachings embodied in the *Chunqiu*, would lose sight of its true meanings (especially when critical intent and taboos necessitate opacities), 'followed Confucius' historical records, amplifying and discussing them to create the *Zuoshi chunqiu* (Zuo Tradition of the Spring and Autumn Annals)'.[32] Sima Qian thus posits deliberation of differences, magnified by the fluidity of oral transmission, as integral to the compilation of *Zuozhuan*. Ideas about encompassing and adjudicating differences are to have profound implications for Sima Qian's own writings. In the autobiographical final chapter of *Shiji* [Records of the Scribe], Sima

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[31] As mentioned above, the *Chunqiu* in the *Zuozhuan* lasts until 479 BC.

[32] *Shiji*, 14.509–10. This passage from the preface to 'The Table of the Twelve Lords' indicates that chronological precision as well as richness of details (more evident elsewhere than in the 'Table') are both crucial when Sima Qian draws upon the *Zuo*. I take this text (*Zuoshi chunqiu*) to largely overlap with what came to be known as *Zuozhuan*, despite the objections of some sceptics.

Qian articulates his own vision of historical writing through Confucius' description of the *Chunqiu*: 'I wanted to convey this [my concerns] through abstract, conceptual language, but it would not be as profound, compelling, and clear as embodying and revealing them through past events and actions.'[33] In fact, the 'thickness' and complexity of events do not obtain in the *Chunqiu* or in the purely exegetical comments, but only in the more detailed accounts in the *Zuozhuan*, and to a lesser extent in their counterparts in the *Gongyang* and *Guliang*.

For an example we can turn to an entry from the first year of the *Chunqiu* (722 BC): 'in summer, in the fifth month, the Liege of Zheng overcame Duan at Yan.' This line invites scrutiny, in the *Gongyang* and *Guliang* interpretations, over the choice of the word 'overcame' (*ke*), the designation of the Liege of Zheng's younger brother as 'Duan' (and not 'younger brother Duan' or 'Gongzi (noble son) Duan'), and the significance of recording the place name, Yan. As we shall see below, the *Chunqiu* entry elicits different questions, answered in the *Zuozhuan* account: How and why did that happen? What were the consequences and implications? What emerges is the implicit belief in narrative as a necessary vehicle of historical meanings enshrined in a 'higher' canonical text.

We are told in the *Zuozhuan* that Wu Jiang, the mother of Lord Zhuang and Duan, favours the latter on account of Lord Zhuang's breech birth. She repeatedly plots with Duan to usurp Lord Zhuang's position. Against all counsel to forestall the rebellion before it is too late, Lord Zhuang refuses to act until Duan's rebellion is full-fledged. Then he crushes it and drives Duan into exile. The consequent estrangement from his mother, whom he vows never to see again until they reach the Yellow Springs (the underworld), is healed only when an ingenious border officer, Ying Kaoshu, suggests that he should dig a tunnel and meet his mother there. By substituting the literal for the metaphorical meanings of 'Yellow Springs', Ying Kaoshu allows reconciliation without undoing Lord Zhuang's vow. The account is framed by exegetical comments which, by elucidating meanings of words in the corresponding entry from the *Chunqiu*, condemn both Duan and Lord Zhuang for the almost fratricidal conflict, and it concludes with the comments of 'the noble man', who lauds the power of filial piety to heal divisions.[34]

If the comments do not sufficiently 'contain' the narrative, it may be because their focus on kinship relations tested, distorted, and then partially restored do not address the boundaries of political authority. On that issue the account is reticent, and tempered enough to support a reading of tacit celebration of eradicating subversion in the interest of greater unity and centralization, despite centuries of commentaries bent on unmasking Lord Zhuang, showing how he is condemned for deliberately abetting Duan and manoeuvring the latter into

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[33] *Shiji*, 130.3297.   [34] *Zuozhuan*, Yin 1.4.

treason. Furthermore, the reconciliation of mother and son, either dismissed as Lord Zhuang's duplicity, or accepted as evidence of his repentance in commentarial traditions, might also have been intended as a lesson in manipulating meanings to master moral rhetoric and achieve a convincing public display of virtue. Indeed, many episodes chronicling Lord Zhuang's expanding power are punctuated by speeches couched in the rhetoric of ritual propriety, which may reflect contemporary diplomatic language or public proclamations, and may also represent moral justifications stemming from pro-Zheng sympathies. Alternatively, following the cue of many commentaries, one can read apparent approbation as hidden irony, delivered in the same spirit as other isolated negative judgements. Either way, the modulations of perspectives are made possible by narrative elaboration.

Various Western Han scholars studied the *Zuozhuan*,[35] but it did not acquire the status of official learning until Liu Xin fought for its inclusion in the Imperial Academy. In his letter reprimanding Academicians who denied the exegetical filiation of the *Zuozhuan* to the *Chunqiu*,[36] he argues for its closer adherence to the sage's teachings, because 'Zuo Qiuming actually knew the master' and shared Confucius' inclinations and aversions. The scant surviving fragments of Liu Xin's comments indicate that he resorts to 'profound principles encoded in subtle words', like any *Gongyang* master, as he drew upon *Zuozhuan* passages to explain the *Chunqiu*. The relationship between the two texts is further affirmed in the first extant complete *Zuozhuan* commentary by Du Yu, who is also responsible for the present year-by-year 'splicing' of the *Zuozhuan* with the *Chunqiu*.[37] Du's scholarship seeks to demonstrate the *Zuozhuan*'s credentials as an exegetical text by elaborating its 'rules', said to summarize or explain how words are used in the *Chunqiu*. He also considerably expands the definition of exegesis by showing how apparent non-correspondence can be regarded as a way of supplementing the canonical text. In the process, he reinvented Zuo Qiuming, whom he presents as both Confucius' disciple and also a 'scribe of Lu', whose knowledge of historical details is so vast that he simply feels it his duty to include them.

The idea of 'Zuo Qiuming' is thus used to bring unity and exegetical purpose to the text. Since the Tang dynasty, there have been scholars doubting his identity or existence, and by now most scholars question not only the attribution but also the idea of single authorship, in part following earlier views on the constitutive role of the historical records from various states in the formation of the *Zuozhuan*. The diversity of sources amalgamated into the *Zuozhuan* is evident on various levels. Clusters of anecdotes that develop around a person, especially wise and capable ministers, might have circulated as 'clan histories'[38] or moral–political

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[35] See *Hanshu*, 88.3620.   [36] Ibid., 36.1967–72.
[37] According to the Qing dynasty scholar Liu Fenglu (1776–1829), this format is first used in Jia Kui's (30–101) commentary on the *Zuozhuan*, which now only exist in fragments.
[38] Dan Zhu (724–770), cited by Lu Chun (d. 806) in *Chunqiu jizhuan zhuanli*, 381.

teachings associated with that character. Calendrical discrepancies in the *Zuozhuan* indicate different geographical origins—the states of Lu and Qi, for example, follow the Zhou calendar, whereas Jin uses the Xia calendar. Sometimes distinctive conventions seem to pertain to materials from different states—for example, only in Jin-related materials are all the commanders and aides listed whenever an army is mobilized, and accounts of power struggles in Song are unique in always mentioning the six ministers.[39] Regional differences in the representation of ruler–subject relationships point to varying historical situations and ideologies. In Chu, for example, the ruler is twice compared to heaven, and his command is upheld as inviolable, and Chu rulers are sometimes praised for their altruism and self-knowledge despite their failures.[40] This may suggest that powerful Chu kings justified, and were justified by political thought maximizing the ruler's claims. By contrast, one is tempted to link the great power of noble lineages in Jin to some recurrent concerns in what might have been Jin sources—the fulsome praise of just rewards for ministers, the arguments justifying the expulsion of unworthy rulers, and the sympathetic treatment of ministers involved in regicide.[41] Views toward the collateral branches of the ruling family also differ. In states where the ascendant noble lineages bore clan names different from that of the ruling house, such as Jin and Qi, noble lineages related to the ruler by kinship are seen as sharing the same fate of decline as the ruling house:[42] they are thus no longer presented in adversarial situations, as in Lu and Song.

Many different kinds of writings and oral performances are embedded in the *Zuozhuan*. Public communications between states (letters, proclamation, covenants, formal diplomatic speeches) seem to have distinct generic boundaries. Many of the genres Liu Xie (*c.* 465–*c.* 522) later discusses in his categorization and discussion of fine writings, *Wenxin diaolong* [The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons], such as remonstrance, ordinances, persuasion, disputation, inscription, recitation, prayers, or lamentation, are based on examples from the *Zuozhuan*. Again, these modes have different formal constraints and distinct stylistic registers.

How and when do these and other divergent materials come to be arranged in chronological order and presented as an exegetical tradition of the *Chunqiu*? My hypothesis is that *Zuozhuan* narratives and arguments, drawn from various sources, answer the need to explain the concise notations of the *Chunqiu* or other annalistic accounts in that style. In other words, the proto 'histories of the states', sometimes said to have been assimilated into the *Zuozhuan*, could also have been elaborations of annals. (After all, anecdotes and contexts also feature

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[39] Ibid., 380–1.
[40] See Yang (ed.), *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 684, 1546, 1002, and 1634–6 (Xuan 4.3, Ding 4.3, Xiang 13.4, and Ai 6.4).
[41] See ibid., 258–9, 501–3, 764–5, 993–4, 1493–6, 1016–8, 1519–20, 655–63, 900–3, and 906–7 (Min 1.6, Xi 33.6, Xuan 15.6, Xiang 11.5, Zhao 28.3, Xiang 14.6, Zhao 32.4, Xuan 2.3, Cheng 17.10, and Cheng 18.1).
[42] See ibid., 1233–9 (Zhao 3.3).

in the *Gongyang* and *Guliang* [though to a much lesser extent], and in exegetical traditions of the *Shijing* and of early ritual texts.) Such projects of making sense, of establishing causality, of defining exemplars, of deriving lessons, were probably related to oral traditions of exegesis, pedagogy, remonstrance, disputation, or proclamation. This may explain the convention of framing ideas as speech acts: a large section of the *Zuozhuan* consists of recorded, invented, or reconstructed speeches.[43] The *Zuozhuan* also refers to, and sometimes cites, a range of written genres, including covenant documents, investiture oaths, interstate notifications, or letters tantamount to policy statements; these might have been stored in archives (*mengfu*), also mentioned several times in the *Zuozhuan*.

Once embedded in precise temporal contexts and chronological ordering, materials of diverse origins or rhetorical purposes contribute to new kinds of causal reasoning. When did this happen? Since we are dealing with a long period of accretion and sedimentation, definitive dates are elusive. Relatively precise calculations based on internal evidence, such as predictions that betray knowledge or ignorance of events to come,[44] may date only sections of the text pertaining to those predictions, rather than the whole text. There is no firm consensus, but many scholars date the text (or good portions of it) to about fourth century BC. The version Sima Qian uses in his *Shiji* seems already very close to the text we know. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century arguments that the *Zuozhuan* is a Liu Xin forgery, based first on *Gongyang* partisanship and political agenda and later on a more general scepticism regarding early texts, have been largely discredited. However, the boundary between additions and interpolations is amorphous for early texts, and it is possible that some portions of *Zuozhuan*, especially the explicit exegetical passages, may date to the late Warring States or even the early Han.

In what sense is the *Zuozhuan* 'historical'? The fact that the *Zuozhuan* commands a degree of temporal and geographical precision and a scope of narrative details—details that sometimes serve no ideological purpose—unparalleled among pre-imperial texts, lends it an aura of being grounded in historical reality. Certain broad trends, such as the heightening scale of wars and skirmishes, the rise and decline of the ideal of the overlord (*ba*) who led covenants among central states and formed a kind of bulwark against groups identified as 'barbarians', the shift of power from ruling houses to ministerial lineages, and the increasing prominence of states to the west (Qin) and the south-east (Chu, Wu, and Yue) by the last third of the *Zuozhuan* are corroborated by archaeological evidence.[45]

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[43] On this issue, see David Schaberg, *A Patterned Past: Form and Thought in Early Chinese Historiography* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), as well as his chapter in this volume.

[44] Yang Bojun, for example, dates the text to 409–389 BC based on such evidence; see his *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 41.

[45] See Du Zhengsheng, *Gudai shehui yu guojia* (Taipei, 1992); and Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Los Angeles, 2006).

As is often the case with early historical writings, literalism yields the wrong questions. For example, we read that in 595 BC, when King Zhuang of Chu (r. 613–591 BC) heard that Song leaders had killed the Chu envoy passing through Song, 'He shook his sleeves and rose. By the time his shoes were brought to him, he had reached the courtyard of his chamber. By the time he received his sword, he was outside the gates of his palace. By the time his chariot was ready, he had reached the marketplace of Puxu.'[46] The question of whether this is an eyewitness account would be unanswerable. What is evident is that empathy and imaginative re-enactment motivate this description, and are deemed important for understanding the past. The corresponding *Chunqiu* entry reads: 'the Chief of Chu laid siege to Song'. The *Zuozhuan* account provides context and motive; what looks like spontaneous outrage is in fact eager aggression following deliberate provocation (an earlier scene tells how the king and the Chu envoy negotiated a fitting reward for the anticipated outcome of the latter's execution by Song leaders). The subjugation of Song is a crucial step in Chu's project to expand its influence eastwards.

It is customary to regard the historical and literary values of the *Zuozhuan* as distinct categories, if not indeed incommensurate attributes. For example, defenders of historical facts are often suspicious of the ghosts, spirits, dreams, omens, prophecies, or secretive communications that periodically appear in the text, whereas literary historians happily appropriate them as the origins of the Chinese fictional imagination.[47] The idea that kernels of historical truths can, or should, be separated from the rich verbal fabric is misleading, however. What is more germane to the sense of history is the conscious formulation of patterns and principles to understand the past. What we now consider supernatural or suprarational occurrences, rhetorical constructions, or narrative devices represent such patterns and principles. In other words, literary constructions and formal consciousness are but modes of historical interpretation. The seventh-century thinker Liu Zhiji understood this very well: he devoted various chapters of his book on the principles of historical writing, the *Shitong* [Comprehensive Understanding of History], to narrative art and rhetorical strategies, constantly upholding the *Zuozhuan* as the source of the finest examples.

We will never know for sure the balance between 'how it really was' and the attitudes, rhetorical modes, and intellectual currents ascendant during the period of the *Zuozhuan*'s formation,[48] but we are on firmer ground with the latter. For example, statesmen might indeed have performed recitations from the *Shijing* in diplomatic gatherings in the seventh and sixth centuries BC,[49] but what

[46] Yang (ed.), *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 756 (Xuan 14.3).

[47] See Zhang Gaoping, *Zuozhuan zhi wenxue jiazhi* (Taipei, 1983); and Sun Lüyi, *Zuozhuan yu zhongguo gudian xiaoshuo* (Beijing, 1992).

[48] Yuri Pines suggests that the *Zuozhuan* can be read as an intellectual history of the Spring and Autumn era; see his *Foundations of Confucian Thought: Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period, 722–453 BC* (Honolulu, 2002).

[49] Examples are found between 637 BC (Xi 23.6) and 506 BC (Ding 4.2) in the *Zuozhuan*.

seems more certain is how the competence to articulate aspirations and negotiate differences through common allegiance to a shared textual tradition is enshrined as a cultural ideal by the time of the *Zuozhuan*'s compilation.[50] The same may be said of the ceremonious courtesy of officers on the battlefield in the *Zuozhuan*, which might have been remembered as an ideal, or was exaggerated through the lens of nostalgia during the intensifying conflicts of the Warring States era. Our rationalist bias rules out the Jin ruler, Lord Jing's dream of a vengeful ghost that resulted in his grotesque death in 581 BC,[51] but we can infer from it the role of powerful Jin ministerial clans in shaping some *Zuozhuan* narratives—the ghost in this story is the ancestor of the Zhao clan that was almost entirely eliminated two years earlier (583 BC).[52] The dream emerges as a crucible for considering the ruler–minister relationship, agency and fate, requital and causality.

In the last two thousand years, those who question whether the *Zuozhuan* is an exegetical tradition of the *Chunqiu* often claim that the *Zuozhuan* is 'about history, not exegesis'.[53] This distinction implies that historical writings are bound to exceed or diverge from exegetical writings because their goal is to illuminate what happened, rather than what should have happened. This is a model of containment and transgression: the 'excesses' in the *Zuozhuan* not contained by exegetical purpose are thought to be closer to the spirit of historical inquiry. More generally, historical inquiry seems to thrive when there is tension between normative systems and the forces that challenge them, between ideological purpose and scepticism. Perhaps it is no accident that the great Han historian Sima Qian, who draws upon the *Zuozhuan* extensively for his *Shiji*, should question whether 'the Way of Heaven' exists, and invite accusations of heterodoxy by encompassing knights-errant, jesters, and money-makers in his sympathy,[54] even while affirming his filiation with the Confucian tradition.

The idea that *Zuozhuan* conforms broadly to Confucian thought as it evolved through the Warring States era is still widely accepted. Yet there are indisputably divergent perspectives in the text, in part a correlative of the diverse sources mentioned earlier. We have here an astounding mix of cynical practicality and idealistic moral rhetoric—views that look to the past and earlier texts for guidance, versus voices that urge changes and laud expediency, arguments for and against greater power for the ruler or the noble lineages, positions for and against the right of the governed to criticize the policies of the leaders of the states, militaristic and strategic interests, versus moralized and ritualized perspectives on warfare, reverence for the 'way of heaven' and the realm of spirits, versus defiance

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[50] See Schaberg, *A Patterned Past*; and Zhang Suqing, *Zuozhuan chengshi yanjiu* (Taipei, 1991).

[51] See Yang (ed.), *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 849–50 (Cheng 10.4).

[52] See ibid., 838–9 (Cheng 8.6).

[53] See, for example, the Song neo-Confucian thinker Zhu Xi (1130–1200), *Zhuzi yulei* (Beijing, 1994), 83.2152; and the Qing Gongyang master Pi Xirui (1850–1908), *Jingxue tonglun* (Beijing, 1954), 4.39–50.

[54] See Ban Gu's charge in *Hanshu*, 62.2737.

or exposure of their fickleness or unknowability, distrust of and hostility for barbarians as being 'not of the same kin and kind', versus praise of them as true inheritors of Chinese cultural values and masters of esoteric knowledge. Some of these views are not assimilable to the idea of a unified, coherent Confucian vision. Indeed, over the centuries, despite the prevailing affirmation of the *Zuozhuan* as a canonical classic that embodies Confucian values, there have always been sceptics who questioned the Confucian credentials of the text, from Han scholars who championed the *Gongyang* and *Guliang* traditions (and felt that the *Zuozhuan* challenged their exegetical prerogatives) to later Confucian thinkers who criticized the *Zuozhuan* for its moments of ruthless pragmatism and for its views that deviate from various versions of orthodox moral and sociopolitical order.

Instead of imagining a mastermind orchestrating divergent perspectives, we should perhaps see differences as a function of the *Zuozhuan*'s complex textual history, in part a correlative of the diverse sources and formal constraints mentioned earlier, in part a reflection of the varying responses to political disorder in a vital formative period in the history of Chinese political thought. It is often said that the *Zuozhuan* is didactic and moralistic. Being 'didactic', however, is not the same as 'univocal'. Different positions encoded in narratives and arguments suggest competing lessons, possibly in contexts of political persuasion of those in power, both by laying down the broad principles of government and by making specific policy recommendations. In this sense, the *Zuozhuan* is a platform for contesting different conceptions of political order that flourished during its long period of accretion.

Narrative units in *Zuozhuan* often involve a piece of causal reasoning: how and why an event happened. This can be a discrete account or one spanning a number of years (interrupted by other narratives). Since the present format of the text, by virtue of being tailored to match the *Chunqiu*, presents materials year by year, episodes that belong to different narrative sequences are juxtaposed, and following an event or a sequence of events (such as a war, a rebellion, or a power struggle) requires excellent memory or patient references to other sections. There are exceptions, of course, the most famous being the more or less self-contained narrative sequences describing Chong'er's (eventually the Jin ruler, Lord Wen r. 636–628 BC) exile, wanderings, return to Jin, and his rise as the most powerful overlord of his time. For the most part, however, the reader has to trace different sequences simultaneously. He is aided to a certain extent by retrospective and prospective comments, advice, or judgements built into or appended to the unfolding narrative. They are provided by the anonymous 'noble man', Confucius, prescient contemporary statesmen, and two categories that often overlap: the scribe (*shi*) and the diviner (*bu*).

Such comments and judgements are dominated by the rhetoric of virtue and good order. These speakers employ moral words liberally—most notably ritual propriety (*li*) and virtue (*de*), but also duty (*yi*), beneficence (*ren*), reverence

(*jing*), rectitude (*zheng*), loyalty (*zhong*), good faith (*xin*), and disinterestedness (*rang*). They presume, and foster, continuity as they invoke past models, especially the creation of the early Zhou order, and encourage aspirations to become models for later generations. They employ enumeration, definitions, distinctions, and the logic of sequential progression to augment a sense of clarity and inevitability. This rhetoric is, however, imposed on accounts of violence, disorder, destruction, and iniquities. What, then, is the relationship between the two? Sometimes this rhetoric is shown to be effective in staving off ruin and restoring ritual, moral, and political order, even if only briefly in some cases. More often than not, the rhetoric of order has no effect on unfolding events, but serves to define the moral parameters of the situation. Unheeded remonstrances and speeches framed as judgements or moral explanations fall into this category. In this sense, there is no necessary paradox between virtuous rhetoric and ethical-political failures. The former simply gives a negative judgement of the latter.

However, the rich circumstantial details that make the *Zuozhuan* engrossing can also introduce tensions between message and context. A high-sounding speech may simply be justifying existing, or newly emerging, power relations. A supposedly self-evident truth, such as the primacy of kin relations in political organization, may turn out to be only one polemical position among several, when we recall that there are many stories of fratricidal conflicts in the *Zuozhuan*. An argument urging a moral position may be couched as extravagant verbal performance, as in 'indirect remonstrances', a kind of instruction via seduction, whereby the persuader abets the desires and encourages the excesses of the listener, only to urge a message of restraint and order.

The common perception that the *Zuozhuan* simply draws didactic lessons from historical events does not do justice to its complex moral universe. An apparently consistent position may conceal different premises. Different perspectives can be associated with the same persona or character. The same ethical vocabulary—most notably appeals to ritual propriety—can support opposed positions. For example, when the Zheng minister Zichan (d. 522) breaks away from old ways and casts penal codes on bronze vessels in 536 BC, the Jin minister Shuxiang, who espouses a more traditionalist position, expresses his opposition in a letter to Zichan by invoking a vision of idealized antiquity wherein ritual norms are fulfilled through the imitation of virtue and submission to its affective power.[55] Zichan, in reply, declares that his goal is to 'save his generation'. Elsewhere in the *Zuozhuan*, Zichan is known for adherence to ritual propriety and for expanding its application. The elevation of ritual propriety could thus serve both conservative and reformist arguments.

On one level, such heterogeneity translates into a kind of impartiality. Compared to the *Gongyang* and *Guliang*, the *Zuozhuan* is more balanced in its

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[55] Yang (ed.), *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1274–7 (Zhao 6.3).

judgements. For example, during the battle between Song and Chu fought at River Hong at 638 BC, the Song ruler Duke Xiang (r. 650–637 BC) refuses to attack before the Chu army crosses the river, and again before the soldiers form their ranks, thus missing the only two opportunities whereby Song might have achieved victory. When Duke Xiang justifies his decision as adherence to ancient rites of battle, his marshal Ziyu gives an eloquent rebuttal, arguing that battles call for different ritual criteria and suggesting that Duke Xiang's standards are outmoded and self-defeating. The *Gongyang* praises Duke Xiang for his respect for ritual, comparing him to King Wen of Zhou, remembered as the epitome of the sage ruler. The *Guliang* blames him, claiming that his indefensible words render him 'less than human'. And the *Zuozhuan* is unique in granting both Duke Xiang and his critic Ziyu the chance to articulate their positions, although there is obviously greater sympathy for Ziyu.

Our sense of balance is also sustained by the *Zuozhuan* narratives' more general engagement and sympathy with more than one viewpoint. In the accounts of battles, for example, we often have shifting perspectives tailored to motives, calculations, and self-justifications on all sides, as well as mutual assessments and retrospective judgements. Sometimes there are attempts to align ritual propriety with the exercise of power, as when Jin defeats Chu at the Battle of Chengpu (632 BC),[56] and when the situation is reversed with Chu's victory and Jin's defeat at the Battle of Bi (597 BC).[57] Even then, rich circumstantial details show where strategy and expediency are substantiated or disguised by moral reasoning. The battle as moral drama becomes problematic in the last major confrontation between Jin and Chu at Yanling (575 BC). Intrigues and dissension mar victory and aggravate defeat. The wise ministers on both sides emphasize the fatuousness of battle and the respective internal problems of Chu and Jin. Instead of a moral explanation of the outcome, we have questions on the meanings of victory and defeat in those volatile times.

The interplay of different perspectives is also evident in the account of the conflict between Chu and Wu that culminates in the Battle of Boju (506 BC). One key factor that contributes to the outcome of the Chu defeat is the defection of Wu Yuan (better known as Wu Zixu) from Chu to Wu. Earlier, King Ping of Chu (r. 528–516 BC) seized his minister Wu She on unfounded slanders, and had Wu She summon his two sons, Wu Shang and Wu Yuan, to come to his rescue. The older son, Wu Shang, considered it his filial duty to come on the futile mission, followed the command, and met inevitable death. Wu Yuan moves to the state of Wu and eventually launches an attack against Chu. The Chu capital falls, and Chu is saved from total destruction only because of the courage of its ministers, one of whom, Shen Baoxu, successfully begs for Qin military assistance. Wu Yuan's loyalty to Wu is to be betrayed when his warnings about the

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[56] Ibid., 452–68 (Xi 28.3–4).   [57] Ibid., 718–47 (Xuan 12.1–2).

threat of a new power, Yue, go unheeded and he is driven to commit suicide.[58] Consideration of meanings of loyalty, justice in ruler–subject relationships, and what constitutes just requital or vengeance means that many different and potentially contradictory positions—including Wu Yuan's vengeance, Wu Shang's self-sacrifice, and Shen Baoxu's determination to act as a loyal subject of Chu—are all given their due.

Differences that might have been a function of textual history or deliberate impartiality can thus translate into our appreciation of a rich and complex picture, not only of past events but also of the forces determining their representation. In the accounts of the rise of overlords such as Lord Huan of Qi and Lord Wen of Jin, for example, statesmen and advisers make speeches celebrating the merging of ritual propriety with power and profit. At the same time we have the narrative contexts of these speeches, as well as accounts of events (from elsewhere in the *Zuozhuan*) that such speeches represent or interpret. We are thus provided with the means to reconstruct events as well as assess their interpretations.

In this sense, contradictions sometimes illuminate processes of historical interpretation. The figure of Confucius is a case in point. Both the *Gongyang* and *Guliang* record the year of Confucius' birth and, as we have seen, mythologize the relationship between the capture of the *lin* and the completion of the *Chunqiu*. The corresponding passage in the *Zuozhuan* is shorter but typically contains more circumstantial details. A Lu officer captures the *lin* but considers it inauspicious. Confucius identifies the animal and corrects the officer's misjudgement, whereupon he takes it.[59] There is no discussion of the *lin* as omen. The *Chunqiu* embedded in the *Zuozhuan* ends two years later, with the death of Confucius. This means that one strand or layer of the text is interested in asserting the link between Confucius and the *Chunqiu*. Despite passages confirming this connection, however, the idea of Confucius pitting textual or moral order against decline and disorder is not consistently pursued in the *Zuozhuan*.

Some anecdotes about Confucius in the *Zuozhuan* are already quasi-hagiographic: a Lu nobleman, ashamed of his own ritual incompetence, on his deathbed enjoins his sons to serve Confucius as a teacher (535 BC). Since Confucius is only 17 at this point, such prescient advice is based on foreknowledge of his rise.[60] Confucius shows cleverness, tenacity, and rhetorical prowess when he officiates at a meeting between the Lu ruler and the Qi ruler at Jiagu (500 BC), where Qi tries unsuccessfully to intimidate Lu.[61] Like 'the noble man', Confucius comments on events in the *Zuozhuan*; from the early sixth century BC on, he is also an

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[58] This story of Wu Yuan in the conflicts between Chu and Wu and then between Wu and Yue spans entries from Zhao 20 (522 BC) to Ai 11 (484 BC). See Yang (ed.), *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 1406–1668.

[59] Ibid., 1682 (Ai 14.1).   [60] Ibid., 1294–6 (Zhao 7.12).   [61] Ibid., 1577–9 (Ding 10.2).

active participant in, and an observer of, events. He emerges as a cipher for a range of positions in the text.

In some comments, Confucius eloquently propounds on the need to adhere to ritual propriety, as if normative standards are absolute and unfungible. In other cases, expediency matters more; sometimes he seems to be a practical moralist who urges efficacy as the criterion of judgement. Cautious assessment of a situation determines his refusal to get involved in contemporary Wei politics or to give his opinions directly to the leaders of the Ji clan in Lu. Confucius criticizes Jin leaders for casting penal codes on bronze vessels. Publicized written codes imply administrative reforms and a more rigid justice, and are in another passage associated with the Zheng reformer Zichan, as noted earlier. Yet Confucius also repeatedly applauds and defends Zichan, including his view on the necessity of harsh punishment. He sometimes does so proleptically, as if anticipating charges that Zichan is 'not humane'.

In the protracted power struggle between Lu rulers and leaders of the dominant Ji clan, Confucius implicitly criticizes the latter, but seems amenable to compromises. After all, when he and his disciples 'served in Lu', they were working for, or with, the ministerial lineages. As supervisor of punishments, Confucius reconnects the tomb of Lord Zhao (r. 541–501 BC), driven into exile by Ji leaders, to the other Lu rulers' tombs, in implicit opposition to the Ji clan. When Lord Zhao's principal wife dies, Confucius takes part in the condolences and then visits the Ji clan: 'the Ji patriarch did not wear mourning caps; so Confucius removed his hempen mourning clothes and bowed.'[62] Most commentators read this gesture as Confucius' tacit protest, but it seems also plausible to interpret it as his concession. Different images of Confucius thus answer needs to present him as an agent in history and as its judge, as someone determined by or rising above his historical situation, or as someone using the past to advocate changes or defend tradition.

FROM SCRIBE TO HISTORIAN

The word for 'history' in modern and classical Chinese, *shi*, sometimes rendered as 'historian', 'scribe', or 'astrologer' in early texts, does not appear in the *Chunqiu*, although the scholarly consensus is that persons holding the office of *shi* were responsible for recording those annalistic entries. The *Gongyang* once refers to the *Chunqiu* as 'trustworthy historical records' (*xinshi*), and the *Guliang* twice refers to a certain style of naming a place as 'following the wording of (older) historical records'.

It is in the *Zuozhuan* that we see the *shi* in his multiple guises—as record keeper, astrologer, diviner, ritualist, adviser, textual specialist, and commentator.

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[62] Ibid., 1670 (Ai 12.2).

The basic function of record-keeping gains in authority when we recall that expectations of how one's actions are remembered in historical records feature in remonstrances and can determine actions. 'If what is recorded does not accord with the rules', so the argument goes, 'what will posterity have to observe?'[63] A Wei minister who drove his ruler into exile is compelled on his deathbed to enjoin his son to bring back the exiled ruler, compelled, that is, by the fear of having a bad name 'stored in the bamboo strips [annals] of the lords'.[64] A king aware of flouting ritual propriety asked not to have his action recorded in the annals.[65]

One of the most memorable episodes on the making of historical records in the *Zuozhuan* deals with scribes who brave death to record a regicide in Qi in 548 BC. The Qi minister Cui Zhu assassinates Lord Zhuang of Qi (r. 553–548 BC) and installs Lord Jing (r. 548–490 BC). He has already gained the acquiescence of other ministers when Qi scribes defy him:

The grand scribe wrote, 'Cui Zhu assassinated his ruler.' Cui Zhu put him to death. The scribe's younger brothers continued to write the same thing, and so two more persons were killed. Another younger brother again wrote it, whereupon Cui Zhu desisted. The scribe of the south, having heard that the grand scribes had all died, clutched the bamboo strips and went to court. He heard that the record had already been made and thus returned.

The line for which the Qi scribes sacrifice their lives is found in the *Chunqiu*. But the story of their courage, as well as the dense web of intrigues and betrayals that incriminate all sides and justify self-preservation at the cost of equivocation, thus showing how the scribes' statement of bare fact is but one facet of a complex picture, belongs to the *Zuozhuan*. Cui Zhu had installed Lord Zhuang earlier and murdered him when he committed adultery with his wife. Cui Zhu and his lineage in turn fall victim to his co-conspirator, Qing Feng, who is eventually driven into exile by self-styled defenders of the Qi ruling house. The sagacious Qi minister Yan Ying (578–500 BC) mourns Lord Zhuang of Qi in a ritually proper fashion, but refuses to die or go into exile for him, while managing to avoid complicity in the new government headed by the usurpers without outright defiance.[66]

The Qi scribes become symbols of the historian's integrity in the tradition. Their unflinching recording of facts comes to be honoured as the ideal of honesty and forthrightness in historical writing (*zhishu*, *zhibi*). Further, the historian's task, as implied not only by the scribes' defiant self-sacrifice but by the framing narrative, extends 'truth-telling' to the details and perspectives that condition judgement. The notion that the moral authority of historical judgement, built

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[63] Ibid., 226 (Zhuang 23.1); see also ibid., 318 (Xi 7.3).
[64] Ibid., 1055 (Xiang 20.7); see also ibid., 609 (Wen 15.2).   [65] Ibid., 810 (Zuang 2.8).
[66] For this series of events, see entries ibid., 1094–152 between Xiang 25 (548 BC) and Xiang 28 (545 BC).

on impartiality, should rectify the injustices in the apparent triumphs of power, is later self-consciously embraced by Sima Qian, and becomes a cultural ideal.

The Song poet-statesman-loyalist-martyr Wen Tianxiang (1236–82) juxtaposes the Qi scribes with the Jin scribe Dong Hu as representatives of the 'righteous breath' between heaven and earth.[67] The *Zuozhuan* tells how Dong Hu wrote 'Zhao Dun assassinated his ruler', apparently contradicting facts and defying Zhao Dun's protest. The truthfulness of Dong Hu's record, as compared to that of the Qi scribes, is of a different kind. The *Chunqiu* and the *Zuozhuan* (as well as the *Gongyang* and *Guliang*) name Zhao Dun as having assassinated his ruler, Lord Ling of Jin (r. 620–607 BC), although according to the narratives in all three commentary traditions the actual act was committed by Zhao Chuan. The scribe Dong Hu[68] explains his judgement thus in the *Zuozhuan*: 'You (Zhao Dun) are the chief minister. Yet fleeing, you did not cross the state boundary; upon returning, you did not punish the culprit. If you are not responsible, who would be?' Similar reasoning appears in the *Gongyang* and the *Guliang*, although much more briefly in the latter case. All three traditions implicitly ameliorate Zhao Dun's culpability, even while asserting his responsibility by enumerating Lord Ling's misdeeds—his gratuitous cruelty, rejection of remonstrance, and murderous intention regarding Zhao Dun—which on some level justify his murder.[69]

The *Zuozhuan* account is unique in adding another level of self-conscious deliberation through Confucius' comments: 'Dong Hu was a worthy scribe of ancient times: he did not conceal anything in his rules of writing. Zhao Dun was a worthy high officer of ancient times: he bore a guilty verdict for the sake of those rules. What a pity! Had he crossed the state boundary, he would have been absolved.' Can Confucius possibly mean that a technical detail of location would have absolved Zhao Dun even if he were guilty? Or does he mean that had Zhao Dun crossed the border, it would have proved that he was actually not party to the regicide? One would assume the latter, considering Confucius' sympathy for Zhao Dun: he wishes this 'worthy high officer of ancient times' had not been responsible. Confucius balances sympathy and judgement as he evaluates evidence and circumstantial contexts, and ponders the margins of intention and execution.

As is often the case, contexts and chronology introduce ambiguities and complexities in the *Zuozhuan*; the *Gongyang*, and *Guliang* are silent on the

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[67] Wen Tianxiang, 'Song of the Righteous Breath' (Zhengqi ge): 'In Qi, the grand scribes' bamboo strips, / In Jin, Dong Hu's brush' (*Wenshan ji*, juan 20). Wen Tianxiang defended the crumbling Song dynasty against the invading Mongols, and his poem suggests that the example of these early historians, as well as his expectation of how he will be remembered in history, give him moral courage.

[68] He is called 'scribe Hu' in the *Guliang* and is unnamed in the *Gongyang*.

[69] Again, the *Guliang* account is much briefer. In the *Zuozhuan*, Lord Ling's misdeeds precede the account of his assassination. In the *Gongyang*, Lord Ling's record as a ruler is provided as retrospective explanation.

earlier exploits of Zhao Dun. It is only in the *Zuozhuan* that we learn of his earlier role in the succession struggles in Jin. Initially opposed to the accession of Yigao (later Lord Ling)—then a mere infant or very young child—thirteen years earlier, he switched his allegiance from a rival prince only under duress. Dominant in Jin government for two decades (621–601 BC), he is eulogized for his just policies at one point (Wen 6.1) but criticized for his harshness at another (Wen 7.5). The *Zuozhuan* thus encompasses two perspectives on Zhao Dun: one indicts him, while the other retains sympathy for him. This apparent ambivalence may be traced to differences rooted in the political reality of the fifth or fourth century BC (voices for or against the Zhao house), or divergent conceptions of the ruler–minister relationship. The *Zuozhuan* stakes out a range of perspectives on the ruler–minister relationship, and emphasizes reciprocity to the extent that the expulsion, or even assassination, of unworthy rulers is sometimes presented as justifiable, although such a position is unthinkable for many imperial commentators.

The account of Lord Ling's assassination seems designed to retain sympathy for Zhao Dun despite his indictment. Irrespective of the motives behind this doubleness, the account remains a remarkable moment of reflection on how historical knowledge and judgement may be established. Dong Hu's record is upheld in the tradition as historical writing that 'targets the intention' (*zhuxin*), as distinct from that which 'targets the traces' (*zhuji*). The historian's acumen (*shishi*) goes beyond the surface to probe what is hidden by combining empathy and judgement, in the spirit of Confucius' comments.

It is by showing 'scribes in action' that the *Zuozhuan* comes close to elaborating ideas about history-writing, in some ways fulfilling ideals it ascribes to the *Chunqiu*: 'Such are the judgments of the *Chunqiu*—subtle yet clear, forceful yet indirect, restrained yet richly patterned, exhaustive yet not excessive, chastising evil and encouraging goodness. Who but the sage could have shaped it?'[70] As we have seen, however, the text also encompasses internal differences that sometimes seem to problematize these formulations of perfect balance.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

770–256 BC   Eastern Zhou Dynasty
770–481 BC   Spring and Autumn Era
480–221 BC   Warring States Era
c. 400–*c.* 300 BC *Zuozhuan* written down
221–206 BC   Qin Dynasty

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[70] Yang (ed.), *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, 870 (Cheng 14.4).

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Chapter 18

Historiography and Empire

Mark Edward Lewis

The creation of a unified empire by the state of Qin in 221 BC transformed the Chinese world, bringing the entire cultural sphere under a single dynasty for the first time. This transformation entailed rethinking China's past in terms of the emergence of such a unified realm. In fact, the prospect of unification had already led to a state-sponsored opus that included a systematic rethinking of the past, which was itself the culmination of several centuries of increasing state patronage of writing. This essay examines three major forms in which the unprecedented unification of China was articulated. First, it analyzes the First Emperor's sponsoring the carving on the peaks of his newly conquered realm stone inscriptions that proclaimed a new epoch that ended the constant warfare of the preceding centuries. Second, it considers the changing role of chronicles, as a single, universal system of synchronisms replaced the timelines of the multi-state world. Finally, it looks at the theory of history articulated in the *Lüshi chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals of Mr Lü]—a synthetic philosophical compendium aimed at impending unification, completed around 240 BC under the patronage of Qin's chief minister.

In these texts, the new forms of writing the past developed in the preceding centuries—inscription, chronicle, philosophical expositions—were synthesized and transformed to articulate the fact of unification. Inscriptions on the achievements of nobles and the gifts received for them had been the primary content of Zhou bronze inscriptions, and such inscriptions were also carved on stone in pre-imperial Qin writings such as the 'stone drums' and the 'imprecation against Chu'. Similarly, the leading states of the later Eastern Zhou period had compiled chronicles of major events, and some state chronicles had become tools for philosophical exposition by scholars in their commentaries. Similarly, scholars had incorporated ever more elaborate accounts of the past—the distant and mythological as well as the recent and political—in their writings, and by the late Warring States period the overarching shape of history had become a philosophical theme.[1] Thus while Qin administrators and scholars attached to the

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[1] Martin Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shi-huang* (New Haven, 2000), ch. 3; and Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany, 1999), ch. 3.

Qin state articulated the novelty of the emergence of a unified empire, they did so through genres that had emerged in the preceding centuries of interstate rivalries.

THE STELE INSCRIPTIONS

According to Sima Qian's *Shiji* [Records of the Scribe], completed in the early first century AD, the First Emperor of Qin and a group of his leading officials made a series of progresses between 219 and 210 BC through the newly conquered eastern regions of his empire.[2] They ascended mountains or elevated sites to erect stones praising the virtuous power of Qin. In doing this they both proclaimed their achievements to high gods of the natural world, and carved the fact of their conquest into the landscape of their new subjects. Some seven of these inscriptions were preserved in Sima Qian's history, for reasons discussed below, and they constitute one of the few surviving records of the Qin government's understanding of its own achievements, expressed in its own words. The genre, structure, and role of these inscriptions have been the subject of an outstanding monograph by Martin Kern, and in what follows I largely summarize and elaborate on his work.

First, it is important to note that, like several other archaeologically recovered sets of ritual inscriptions from the Qin state, the stele texts are variations of one basic model. Although modifications appear, sometimes in response to local conditions, Qin sought to impose a single, standardized message upon all the newly conquered eastern states. In this way the disparate sites were all to be absorbed in the common 'suprahistorical frame of the new empire'. A hitherto diverse history, in which each state had been marked by its own customs and recorded its own chronicles, was to be absorbed into a single ideal history as articulated in the inscriptions. Their stone medium and repetitive, ritualized structure marked the finality of the conquest, which would replace the flux of events with the fixed sequence of genealogy.[3]

An example of the stele's contents, and their approach to history, is the relatively brief first inscription from Mount Yi as translated by Kern:

> The August Thearch has established the state;
> Originally in times past
> He inherited the throne and was designated king.
> He launched punitive attacks against the rebellious and recalcitrant,
> His might shook the four extremities;
> Martial order and rightness stood upright and straight.
> The military officers received the imperial orders,

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[2] On Sima Qian, see William Nienhauser, Jr. in this volume.
[3] Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang*, 119–25.

Through a passage of time not long,
They exterminated the six cruel and violent ones (the other Warring States).
In his twenty-sixth year (221 BC)
He presents the lofty designation (his new title) to those above (ancestors)—
The way of filial piety is brilliantly manifest and shining!
He sends down spreading grace,
And personally tours the distant regions.
He ascends Mt. I (Yi),
And the multitude of officials attending
All meditate on the long duration (of past efforts).
They recall and contemplate the times of chaos:
When they divided the land, established discrete states,
And thus unfolded the impetus for struggle.
Attacks and campaigns were daily waged;
How they shed their blood in the open countryside—
This had begun in highest antiquity.
Through untold generations
One (rule) followed another down to the Five Thearchs,
And no one could prohibit or stop them.
Now today, the August Thearch
Has unified all under heaven under one lineage—
Warfare will not arise again!
Disaster and harm are exterminated and erased,
The black-haired people live in peace and stability,
Benefits are lasting and enduring.
The multitudes of the officials recite this epitome
And carve it into this musical (?) stone
To manifest the constant guidelines (of the empire).[4]

This contains the basic elements that structure all of the inscriptions. After a brief historical prologue, it notes the circumstances of setting up the stone, narrates the military conquest, epitomizes the universal order established by Qin's laws, asserts the eternal nature of this order, and finally returns to the erection of the inscription, with a eulogy by the officials. While the scale and balance of the elements varies from inscription to inscription, the fundamental elements recur in each example.[5]

These recurrent structural elements can, in turn, be divided into sub-elements. Thus the initial setting of the situation routinely describes the First Emperor touring and ascending the mountain, gives a date or year, and concludes with the officials meditating on Qin's achievements. The embedded historical narrative often refers to some 'fundamental beginning' of Qin's achievements, narrates

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[4] Ibid., 10–15. This inscription, not preserved in the *Shiji* but only in later collections, may have been miscopied in places. Kern posits that it should begin with the reference to the year, and that the first nine lines would appear after the officials' meditation.
[5] Ibid., 10–49 (for complete translations), 131–9.

an idealized military conquest, enumerates the glorious achievements of universal order, and finally asserts the permanent blessings of Qin's rule. The concluding section is usually a final self-referential statement noting the officials' encomium and their request to carve this in stone to transmit the emperor's merits up to the spirits and down to later people.

Given their fixed structure, repetitive vocabulary, and rigorous rhyme scheme in the classical tradition, these inscriptions are clearly records of ritual performances that are themselves part of the ritual that they record. They are historical, however, in at least three senses. First, they record and date a series of rituals that complete Qin's conquest. In this way they tell us what Qin did to secure and sacralize its triumph. However, the dates were sometimes chosen purely for their auspicious character, making them once again more ritual acts than historical records. Second, the middle section places the unification within a historical narrative that moves from division and war to universal order and peace. Third, the recurrent pairing of 'fundamental beginning' with 'permanent duration' transforms the First Emperor's conquests and institutional reforms into cosmic events marking universal redemption. This is particularly true in the Mount Yi inscription, which traces the history of endless warfare back to the beginning of human history, and makes the unification as much a religious as a political event.

The second element—accounts of the wars and institutional reforms—most closely approximates to an historical narrative. These records correspond to the accounts of services on Zhou bronzes that reported to ancestors the gifts and honours received from the king. However, whereas the bronzes specified particular actions, the 'narrative' in the Qin inscriptions is purely schematic. There are generic references to suppressing the 'rebellious and recalcitrant' or the 'violent and cruel', and they sometimes cite the wickedness of the kings of the rival states. The Mount Yi inscription refers to a universal history of violence, while others cite only recent decades. However, no specific battles are ever mentioned; all conquests are undifferentiated punitive expeditions against generic evildoers. The accounts of institutional reforms are sometimes more specific, including the unification of script and measures, but they usually provide vague *topoi*: the fact of unification, the brilliance and industry of the emperor, the stable social order with everyone in the proper place, the establishment of universal norms and standards, the emperor's bestowing peace on the people and even the animals, and the boundless spatial and temporal extension of Qin rule.

Thus Kern is certainly right that these inscriptions are primarily ritual acts, intended to 'define rather than narrate history'. They construct a sacralized history, condensing 'an individual situation into a standardized model'. Actual events vanish into recurring structures, and a formalized language suppresses all information except the unification of a war-torn world. They manipulate verbs, adverbs, antonym compounds, synonym compounds, and hendiadys to impose the single theme of unification on their vision of history, just as Qin conquests

had imposed it on the world. Echoing the institution of a single script, system of measures, calendar, and system of laws, the inscriptions asserted political unity as the culmination of human history, which ended in the eternal unity of the Qin empire.[6]

However, it is significant that Kern's interpretation of the inscriptions—as a ritualized performance defining and completing the new empire—is an act of scholarly *rediscovery*. For two thousand years they have been read in terms dictated by their placement within Sima Qian's historical narrative. While Kern emphasizes the inscriptions' performative aspect, and their self-referential account of the ritual ascent and oral recitation that produced them, it was the *written* account that endured. Like Zhou odes re-read as political allegory in their commentaries, statements attributed to Confucius that were assigned a meaning through placement in an invented biography, or unrelated poems in the *Chu ci* [Songs of the South] re-read as episodes from Qu Yuan's life, the Qin inscriptions received a new and enduring meaning within Sima Qian's account of Qin's rise and fall.

The Han historian ironically dismantled the triumphal Qin ritual texts in at least two ways. First, by surrounding each inscription with contemporary events, he contrasted the claims of universal peace with events indicating increasing disorder and resistance. The dissonance between the inscriptions' claims and the encompassing narrative's tale of breakdown transformed the rituals that completed the empire into signs of a detachment from reality that accompanied and explained Qin's fall. Second, by interspersing the inscriptions among accounts of the First Emperor's pursuit of immortality, which also entailed trips to the east and the ascent of mountains, Sima Qian suggested that Qin's claims to have created eternal order were likewise the fantasies of a madman.[7]

Martin Kern devotes one section of his book to Sima Qian's use of the inscriptions. He points out that neither the Qin inscriptions nor the Han historian tell how Qin history 'really was', and that both accounts are ideological constructions that carefully select information and omissions. He also notes that the focus on the First Emperor's pursuit of immortality was a veiled denunciation of his own master, Emperor Wu of the Han, and that Qin's political failings are dealt with by incorporating Jia Yi's early essay on Qin's failings. Finally, Kern makes the rather Chinese argument that the inscriptions should have been placed in the chapters on ritual and music, which 'represent the symbolic core of imperial rulership'. Placing them in the annals of the First Emperor results in an *argumentum AD hominem* that dissociates the person of the emperor from the

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[6] Ibid., 148–54.

[7] Stephen W. Durrant, 'Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Portrayal of the First Ch'in Emperor', in Frederick P. Brandauer and Chun-chieh Huang (eds.), *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China* (Seattle, 1994).

institution in order to make his individual failings the historical explanation for the fall of Qin.[8]

Granting these arguments and the inaccuracy of Han depictions of a semi-barbaric Qin that rejected the Zhou cultural tradition, Kern's description of the Qin inscriptions and Sima Qian's narrative as equally ideological and detached from history remains unpersuasive. The argument fails, both in the relation of the two sets of texts to the actual course of events, and in the internal consistency of the texts themselves as exemplars of their respective intellectual programmes.

First, whatever the biases and distortions of Sima Qian's account, the Qin empire *did* fall. The *Shiji* provides both a detailed narrative of that fall and, in the essay of Jia Yi, a useful analysis of the reasons for Qin's collapse. The Qin inscriptions, in contrast, proclaim the eternal triumph of a regime that would last only a few more years. They were invalidated by the course of events, and the artifice and manipulation in Sima Qian's account simply highlights the chasm between what the Qin ritualists proclaimed and what actually transpired. Moreover, for all its omissions or distortions, the *Shiji* provides a detailed narrative of Qin's rise and fall, while the inscriptions simply assert the transition from an era of immorality and warfare to one of universal and eternal order. They provide, not an ideologically framed history, but what is virtually a religious narrative of world redemption.

Besides omitting information for the sake of their ritual programme, the inscriptions also evince a strong tension between their formal conservatism and their message of radical innovation. As Kern has shown, the language of the stelae reveals a deep familiarity with, and faithfulness to, long-held aesthetic standards, indicating 'a strong ideological impulse towards the cultural tradition'. This is particularly notable in the rhyme scheme, which is unparalleled in its regular observance of word endings fixed in the *Shijing* [Classic of Poetry]. The erudition and cultural conservatism of the inscriptions challenge later Han depictions of Qin as violently hostile to textual scholarship and the Zhou literary heritage.[9]

However, the inscriptions repeatedly assert the unprecedented nature of the First Emperor's achievements, and how they constitute a clear break with the past. Thus the Mount Yi inscription cited above noted how bloodshed and warfare had marked all human history down to the First Emperor, who for the first time united the world and thus ended warfare for ever. Other inscriptions note how he instituted a 'new beginning', that his universal standardization of writing and measures was a unique achievement, that his achievements were unprecedented,

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[8] Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang*, 155–63. This section of the book is subtitled 'Between Ch'in History and Han Historiography' which would make sense only if 'history' refers to the actual sequence of events, and not to accounts of them.

[9] Ibid., 127–30, ch. 5.

and that Qin was clearly superior to earlier times. These lines foreshadow the speeches that Sima Qian places in the mouths of Qin courtiers, who argued that, given his unprecedented achievements, the ruler should receive an unprecedented title and impose new institutions that marked a clear break with earlier dynasties.[10] Thus Han claims that the Qin imperial regime was hostile to the Zhou tradition find support in the stone inscriptions, however conservative the latter's language and form.

The inscriptions' ambiguous attitudes toward the past parallel a broader tension in the imperial Qin state's relation to its own history. As argued by Jia Yi in his aforementioned essay, despite its proclaimed vision of a radically new world-empire, the Qin imperial government carried forward all the basic institutions of the Warring States polities. The direct administration of peasant households mobilized for military service continued to be the organizing principle of the state, with a large servile labour pool provided by those who violated any of the numerous laws. No longer necessary for interstate warfare, this giant machine for extracting service survived as a tool in search of a use.[11] Thus the institutions of the Qin state, like the stone inscriptions proclaiming its triumph, carried forward the practices of the world from which they emerged, even as they asserted a complete transformation of that world. Like later revolutionaries in France or Russia, they proclaimed a total break with the past in order to create an ideal new world, but used the institutions of the *ancien regime* to forge their new state.

In conclusion, the inscriptions preserve a ritual performance that articulated a new model of history as one element in the creation of a new political order. Conservative in style and in appealing to the entire Zhou textual heritage, they nevertheless described the Qin unification as an unprecedented historical achievement whose new institutions would create a regime of eternal order. The transformative character of the unification, and of the new regime that would extend without limit in time and space, emptied all previous history of any real significance. Thus the inscriptions, as befitted ritual proclamations to the spirits, articulated a religious vision of history, defined by a moment of absolute transformation, like the Fall or the Incarnation in a Christian history.

In inserting the inscriptions into a narrative, Sima Qian refuted their epochal proclamations by drawing them back into the stream of history. Incorporating the stelae into the *Shiji* also changed their genre and intended audience. The stelae were removed from their ritual context, as proclamations to spirits from

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[10] Ibid., 26, 27–9, 33, 38–9, 42, 45–6. For Sima Qian's account of the Qin officials' insistence on political novelty, see Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian: Qin Dynasty*, trans. Burton Watson (New York, 1995), 42–5, 49, 53–5, 58.

[11] Mark Edward Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), 70–2.

stones placed on mountain peaks, and reinserted into the world of men, where scholars could read them as history. Sima Qian further muted the epochal nature of Qin's achievement by positing that a single monarch had ruled the world since the Yellow Emperor. In structuring his history with 'Fundamental Chronicles' (*benji*) that passed from the early sages through the Three Dynasties, then to the Qin, the rebel Xiang Yu, and finally the Han, he made unity a constant condition, only occasionally lost in times of decay like the Eastern Zhou. Such periods of temporary division were dealt with in tables that drew multiple chronicles and calendars into a single system based on presumptive unity.[12] Given a world eternally structured by an undivided sovereignty, the First Emperor's claim of an unprecedented achievement was mocked by an understanding of the past, just as his proclamation of an eternal order was ridiculed through the forward-looking record of his dynasty's rapid collapse. This backward projection of a unified state negated the millennial transformation claimed by the Qin inscriptions, and restored the First Emperor's conquest to the regular flow of time as just another dynastic foundation.

THE UNIFIED CHRONICLES

While the Qin inscriptions—the first attempt to write the creation of the empire into history—failed to establish the enduring terms in which that creation was understood, a more permanent Qin contribution to the historiography of empire was the creation of a *single* political chronicle. Above, I noted how Sima Qian constructed such a chronicle as the frame for his narrative, but the first creation of a single chronicle was the consequence of Qin's elimination of all rival states, and, thereby, of all rival chronicles and measures of time.

To recognize the significance of this achievement, one must consider the pivotal role of chronicles in establishing a sense of historical time, and the difficulty in constructing a single chronicle as a line where any event can be located. People in recent centuries have become accustomed to assigning events to a year numerically fixed along a BC/AD axis. However, the use of a supposed birth year for Christ as a dividing point for all of time was only introduced in the sixth century AD. A couple of centuries later, Bede identified years in terms of AD only as a measure of *divine* time applied to the Church or the Heavens, while mundane events were still measured in terms of reign years or related time schemes. By the early seventeenth century, Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* (1614) used AD enumeration (without the AD annotation), but his history from the Creation to 167 BC uses a jumble of unspecified dating schemata. Thus the notion of an abstract, enumerated time fixed along a single axis, where all events can be

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[12] Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, 309–11.

ordered, is a relatively recent development, as is the carving of that axis into centuries or decades.[13]

In antiquity, when slower transport and communications meant that establishing simultaneity across vast distances was not an issue, time for most people was local time. Family events, such as birth or marriage, provided points of measure (although counting the years of one's life was often not a significant issue), or, for a whole community, some event such as a flood or drought. Only with a political unit, or some enduring institution, could a fixed system of enumeration be imposed, and it would serve as a measure only within the ambit defined by that institution. The fixed count of years provided by a state or religious body defined a 'public' time, whose major events provided fixed marks that served as common points by which people could establish their relative places in a single system. Thus a character in Xenophanes could ask, 'How old were you when the Mede came?'[14]

As this example indicates, any chronological statement, in conventional human experience, is a synchronism; to fix anything in time is to identify it as simultaneous with another event. This is true even for 'absolute' time enumerated along a scale, for the numbers themselves are abstracted from linkages to events that give them meaning. Thus a fixed system of dating can only exist within a community that shares common major experiences, such as the Persian invasion, and has an enduring institution that can regulate and preserve a counting of years around a defined standard, such as consulships in Rome or reign years in many monarchies. Any account of the past that included more than one community necessitated synchronizing at least two columns of events, fixing that event A in one community took place in the same year as event B in another. Without one universal series of numbered years fixed to an agreed event(s), establishing chronological sequences across many states required the synchronization of their respective time schemes.[15]

In his monograph on ancient methods of establishing chronologies as a foundation for history, Denis Feeney has reconstructed the lengthy process by which a single chronicle of events was established for the Mediterranean world. This included establishing a Panhellenic system of counting years in terms of Olympiads; fixing synchronicities between the foundations and subsequent histories of Rome, Carthage, and the Sicilian cities; fixing dates for Asian monarchies in terms of Roman historical records; combining ancient Greek and Roman histories into a single account (with the Trojan Wars as a shared origin); and mapping the biblical account onto the achieved synthesis of Greece and Rome.[16] Such synchronicities became an issue only when previously separate peoples became

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[13] Denis Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History* (Berkeley, 2007), 7–12.

[14] Anthony Aveni, *Empires of Time: Calendars, Clocks, and Culture* (New York, 1989), 120–2.

[15] Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, 12–16.   [16] Ibid., chs. 1–4.

entangled, so the greatest engine for this development was the rise of the Roman Empire. As the Romans fought and conquered an ever-broader range of peoples, as Greek culture became the source of Roman elegances, and as Christianity became the faith of the Roman Empire, it became essential to draw the entire Mediterranean world into a single chronology. This entailed the creation of ever-broader systems of synchronism, which ultimately formed the abstracted axis to be structured around the hypothetical birth of Christ.

These examples demonstrate how the emergence of a notion of time as a continuous medium through which all things move is tied to the widening of spatial horizons, and to the formation of large-scale political units or systems. However, creating a unitary world-state is not essential to developing a notion of shared time and fixing a standard scale for identifying years. As in ancient Greece or medieval Europe, regular exchange and common institutions (competitive games, the Church) would create the need and possibility for a shared system of counting years, although local methods of enumeration would generally continue within each state. Nevertheless, political control was the most effective means of imposing a single system of counting years in which members of a community could locate any event, from the most private family occasion to the most momentous public occurrence. Thus the bc/ad scale has become a worldwide standard largely through the European conquests. Even the rival religious traditions of Judaism and Islam, which maintain their own year counts, must also perform the synchronisms necessary for coordinating action with the world at large.

Forging a Chinese empire entailed a similar process of synchronizing distinct chronicles to establish a single, encompassing system. While the Shang and Zhou dynasties had developed systems for enumerating years in terms of sequential monarchs, these had presumably extended no further than their political control.[17] With the collapse of royal Zhou power following the loss of the western capital, the emergence of competing states also led, potentially, to the emergence of rival calendars and rival methods of counting years. Since enumeration by the reign of a ruler was conventional for identifying years, each state would have employed a distinct year count in its chronicles. Calculating years according to reigns would have been particularly important in that these chronicles were most likely addressed to ancestral spirits, just as were the bronzes and other ritual inscriptions of historical events to which they were related. These all presented, not a 'historical', but rather a 'ritual' reality.[18] Thus calculating

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[17] Mark Edward Lewis, 'Evolution of the Shang Calendar', in Colin Renfrew and Iain Morley (eds.), *Measuring the World and Beyond: The Archaeology of Early Quantification and Cosmology* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

[18] Yuri Pines, 'Chinese History Writing Between the Sacred and the Secular', in John Lagerwey, *Rituels, pantheons et techniques: Histoire de la religion chinoise avant les Tang* (Leiden, forthcoming); and Joachim Gentz, 'The Past as a Messianic Vision: Historical Thought and Strategies of Sacralization in the Early *Gongyang* Tradition', in Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Achim Mittag, and Jörn

according to the years of the ruler would have been not merely convenient, but filial. The *Zuozhuan* [Zuo Tradition] defined a capital as a city with an ancestral temple, which meant that any true state (some of which were no more than cities) would have kept its own chronicle, in which years were named for the rulers of that state.[19]

While multiple states thus required multiple systems for counting years, maintaining a shared language for regular diplomatic interchanges and frequent interstate assemblies also necessitated synchronizing chronicles with those of neighbours. As demonstrated in the *Zuozhuan*, such interstate meetings employed a rigorous protocol, defined through the accumulated precedents of earlier meetings and histories of gifts and rewards. Consequently, participants required a common chronicled past where everyone could agree upon the position of each event.[20] Thus the political situation of the Eastern Zhou period dictated not only the existence of multiple chronicles, each fixed by the genealogy of its own state, but also that each state maintain synchronisms between its own chronicle and those of its neighbours, at least those important enough to require regular political contacts.

The clearest evidence for this situation is the *Zuozhuan*, both in its content and its form. This text, probably written in the late fourth century BC, is now structured as a commentary to the chronicle of the state of Lu generically identified as the *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals]. While its original form remains disputed, many entries *do* specifically discuss the practices of the *Chunqiu*. Many of these deal with interstate relations, and they argue that the *Chunqiu* recorded only events that were formally reported to the Lu court by foreign emissaries. Thus deaths and funerals of allied rulers, including those of tiny neighbouring polities such as Zhu and Cao, are regularly mentioned, while the deaths of Zhou kings are often omitted. Major political events, such as the victory of Zheng over Song in 712 BC that briefly established the former as the dominant state, are also omitted where formal reports were not submitted:

Winter, the tenth month. The Earl of Zheng leading the Guo army invaded Song. On the day *renxu*, he greatly defeated the Song army, avenging its invasion of Zheng. Song did not report a decree, so the *Chunqiu* did not record it. Whenever the hegemons issue a decree, if they report it, then it is recorded; otherwise it is not. The same is true of the success or failure of military expeditions. Even if a state were annihilated, unless the defeat was reported, or the winners reported the victory, it would not be recorded on bamboo tablets.[21]

Rüsen (eds.), *Historical Truth, Historical Criticism, and Ideology: Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective* (Leiden, 2005), 235.

[19] Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, 130; id., *Early Chinese Empires*, 93; and id., *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany, 2006), 136–150.

[20] On the systematic interstate relations of the period, see Liu Boji, *Chunqiu huimeng zhengzhi* (Taipei, 1963).

[21] Yang Bojun, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* (Beijing, 1981), 1607 (Duke Ai year 1).

Here the contents of the chronicles are dictated by diplomatic exchanges between states. This focus on those with whom one regularly deals is also reflected in the *Zuozhuan*, which cites more than a hundred campaigns for smaller states closer to the centre, while listing few for the more powerful but distant states of Qin, Wu, and Yue.[22] Presumably any event was reported in terms of the chronicle of the state making the report, and then converted into the Lu system. Thus the single chronicle of the latter would hide a world of synchronisms converting between the multiple counting systems of different states.

Such synchronisms also inform the structure of the *Zuozhuan* itself. Organized as a year-by-year chronicle, with each year identified by the ruler of Lu and his year in office, it narrates the major political events of the Eastern Zhou world from 722 to 481 BC. While the Lu chronicle provides the frame, the text narrates events where Lu plays no significant role, including interstate negotiations and conflicts, as well as internal struggles in many states. To produce such a record, in which events in many states are worked into a sequence provided by Lu, the authors required records or chronicles from numerous states, intertwined through the establishment of synchronisms. It is possible that an independent work was later cut up to form the commentary, as posited by Maspero and supported by the discovery of related cognate material in a tomb at Mawangdui, but this would still have entailed working together several unrelated chronicles into a single thread.[23] While we cannot be certain that the resulting 'pan-Chinese' narrative was in all cases accurate, it has provided the basis for all accounts of the period from the opus of Sima Qian down to the present day. To the extent that we have any sequential, dated narrative of events from this period, it is due to the *Zuozhuan*.

An account of all the Eastern Zhou states structured around the chronicle of Lu could also have provided a background to the theory of Confucius as the uncrowned king of a Lu state that had textually supplanted the Zhou. This theory, which emerged in the tradition of the *Gongyang Commentary*, is usually derived from the idea that, in reworking the Lu chronicle, Confucius had embedded moral–political judgements where he acted as a Son of Heaven who bestowed rewards and imposed punishments. However, the imposition of a single, ruler-based chronicle to structure time within a given area presupposed the dominance of that ruling house over the area. Thus, using the chronicle of Lu as the temporal thread for an account encompassing the Zhou realm would have indicated the kingship of Lu, but such a counterfactual kingship could have existed only within the chronicle itself. One should also note that the *Gongyang*'s assertion of the absence of any true Son of Heaven fits well with its

[22] Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany, 1990), 36, 261 n. 86.
[23] See the discussion by Anne Cheng in Michael Loewe (ed.), *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley, 1993), 71.

conventional dating to the Qin dynasty, although this Confucian abolition of the Zhou was probably not intended as an endorsement of Qin ascendancy.[24]

Another pan-Zhou chronicle that was compiled around the same time as the *Zuozhuan* was the *Zhushu jinian* [Bamboo Annals]. This provides dates, although not an exhaustive list, from the supposed time of Yao in 2145–2046 BC until 299 BC, when the chronicle was buried in the tomb of the Wei ruler. Rediscovered in the third century AD, it has a controversial history of reconstruction and transmission. The current text shows the state of Wei compiling its own pan-Chinese chronicle, but using the reigns of the Zhou kings to identify years, while writing recent history from its own perspective and that of its predecessor, Jin.[25] In this way it anticipates the later 'Fundamental Chronicles' of Sima Qian that trace a multi-dynastic thread of sovereignty from the Yellow Emperor onward.

While interstate diplomacy necessitated the establishment of synchronic tables linking the different year-naming systems—a practice elaborated by certain ambitious intellectual projects and (perhaps) rulers with imperial aspirations—the creation of a single chronological thread, defining a temporal dimension shared by the known world, resulted from the Qin conquest. As the number of states declined, the number of systems requiring synchronization also shrank. When Qin swept away its remaining rivals, it not only eliminated a world of competing states, but also a world of rival year-counts. The unification of space celebrated in the inscriptions was also a unification of time, and the vision of an eternal empire ruled by a numbered series of rulers (First Emperor, Second Generation, and so on) also entailed a single counting system in which everyone in the world identified any year in the same manner.[26] This link between the measurement of time and political power, however, was occluded by the fact of unification, which, as in the establishment of the calendrical hegemony of the modern West, disguised a cultural artefact as an abstract dimension.

This political constitution of a temporal dimension, in which an individual life was structured through measurement against the scale of the ruler's reign, figures in the 'Record of Years' (*bian nian*) found in tomb eleven at Yunmeng. This document combines the sorts of records found in a political chronicle with those of a family record. Running from the first year of King Zhaoxiang of Qin (306 BC) to the thirtieth year of the First Emperor (217 BC, four years after unification), the chronicle gives the years of major political events—largely military campaigns—until the birth of its subject, Xi, the Qin soldier and official buried in the tomb. From the year of Xi's birth, the chronicle lists not only years but months, and concentrates on events in Xi's family, such as births and deaths,

[24] Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, 140–4.

[25] See the discussion by Shaughnessy in Loewe (ed.), *Early Chinese Texts*, 39–44.

[26] Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian: Qin Dynasty*, trans. Burton Watson (New York, 1993), 43.

and steps in Xi's career. When it records the deaths of Xi's parents, it records these before noting political developments in the same year. Whereas political documents in the same tomb replace the First Emperor's personal name with synonyms, this text does not. This marks it as a 'private' or 'family' document, but the family history is denominated by the reign-years of the Qin kings, and intertwined with 'public' political events. Thus while it anticipates later family records or funerary inscriptions, it takes the form and shares the content of a straightforward political chronicle.[27]

While the Qin regime recognized that it had unified time, which was henceforth to be measured in the unending count of imperial generations and years, its attitude toward the chronological disorder of earlier centuries remains unclear. The inscriptions are structured around a transition from a chaotic and bloody past to a peaceful and orderly present/future, so it is uncertain that either the agents of the state or its scholastic supporters were interested in constructing an accurate chronology of the past. Martin Kern, for example, asserts that the inscriptions 'no longer competed with other texts', but rather 'silenced the many voices of history and monopolized memory'.[28] Moreover, unlike the Han dynasty that succeeded it, the Qin ruling house had an ancestral chronicle dating back to antiquity, a significant part of which has been preserved in Sima Qian's opus. Consequently, it relied less on supposed links to earlier dynasties. Finally, philosophical traditions associated with Qin articulated a model of history positing significant historical evolution that rendered the political model of antiquity inapplicable to the present. Given these factors, it is not certain that the Qin made any attempt to sponsor a record of earlier history.

The absence of any reliable narrative of the last centuries before unification probably explains the difficulty that Sima Qian confronted in constructing his own account. Unlike the Qin, the Han ruling house had no genealogy or chronicle. This, as well as his own or his family's commitment to compiling a comprehensive history modelled on Confucius, guided Sima Qian's effort to ground Han authority in an early version of the *zheng tong* (sequence of legitimate dynasties), where an undivided and unbroken sovereignty was traced back to the Yellow Emperor. Granting Qin the place of honour as Zhou's successor, he gave it the only chronicle for the Warring States period, while the other states were reduced to genealogies (*shijia*). He then struggled to cobble together a chronology out of the competing year-name systems with tables that aligned the different states. He also incorporated stories from fictionalizing or rhetorical accounts found in philosophical texts or manuals, such as those that became the *Zhanguoce* [Stratagems of the Warring States]. While his labours were heroic, the end result remains full of omissions and contradictions. Down to the present

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[27] Gao Min, *Yunmeng Qin jian chu tan, zeng ding ben* (Zhengzhou, 1981), 10–11.
[28] Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shi-huang*, 149–150.

day, scholars have been unable to provide a solid and coherent chronology of Warring States history.[29]

UNIFICATION AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS

While Qin used innovative ritual performances to announce its transformation of the world, and subsumed all time under the lists of its rulers, it also combined the diverse intellectual traditions that had emerged in the Warring States period to forge an intellectual synthesis. The fruit of this effort was the *Lüshi chunqiu*, which was sponsored by Lü Buwei, the chief minister of Qin, and tutor to the child who grew up to become the First Emperor. The postscript to its first section indicates that it was intended to instruct the young monarch in the art of rule. This work was the first of several state-sponsored compendia produced at the end of the Warring States and in the early empires, all of which sought to produce unity in the intellectual field to match that being attained in politics. The *Lüshi chunqiu* structured the synthesis in part by grouping teachings of rival schools under the seasons and months of the year as structured in the 'Monthly Ordinances' of the ruler, so that each doctrine was granted its limited place within an encompassing whole formed by the new political order.[30]

While this seasonal structure probably gave the book its title, it is not without interest that the name is identical with that of the state chronicles. Indeed the text places great emphasis upon the nature of time and timing, and it draws together several major ideas developed by Warring States thinkers to formulate a theory of history.[31] Although it is uncertain that Qin's ruler or his closest advisers were interested in this theory, it *was* part of the broader process of creating a unified elite culture—a process that transcended the personal interests of any particular court-based circles.

The core of the theory of history in the *Lüshi chunqiu* focuses on the emergence of the state. Drawing together accounts of how the sages first created the state, and later reformers modified it to meet new needs, the text provides a model in which the entire process of human history converges in the creation of an ideal state. In this way the theory of history justified both the state as it existed at the end of the Warring States period, and the role of the ruler as the creator and innovator whose adaptations made possible the constant adjustment

[29] On Sima Qian's tables, see Grant Hardy, 'The Interpretive Function of *Shih chi* 14, "The Table by Years of the Twelve Feudal Lords"', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 113:1 (1993), 12–24. For examples of attempts by modern scholars to construct accurate chronicles of Warring States history, see Yang Kuan, *Zhanguo shi* (Shanghai, 1980), 534–84; and Qian Mu, *Xian Qin zhuzi xi nian*, 2 vols. (Hong Kong, 1956).

[30] Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China*, 302–6.

[31] The different aspects of time and timing in the text are expounded in James Sellmann, *Timing and Rulership in Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals* (Albany, 2002).

of human institutions to changing circumstances. In the balance of this section I will briefly sketch several major aspects of this theory of history as the account of the emergence of the complete, fully adapted state.

First, one should note that the text was composed in cognizance of the elimination of the Zhou state, which left vacant the position of Son of Heaven. Moreover, it noted that various states, including Qi, Chu, Wu, and Yue, had tried to achieve dominance (hinting at certain lists of hegemons, except for the omission of Jin), but that each had failed and (according to the text) perished. Finally, the text notes the evanescence of power, stating that Yu, Xia, Shang, and Zhou each had been dominant, but perished in the end.[32] These passages are reinforced by dozens that list the causes for the collapse of all the dynasties that had dominated the world in the past. The chapter 'Foreknowledge' (*xian zhi*) consists entirely of examples of how wise people are able to anticipate the destruction of states.[33] This focus on history as a record of failure is summarized in the chapter 'Observing the Age' (*cha shi*):

Though in the world there are scholar-knights who possess the Dao, within any state they are few in number. . . . This is the reason ages of order have been so short and ages of anarchy lasted so long. Accordingly, there have not been even four universal kings or six lords-protector (hegemons), yet perished states can gaze one upon the other and imprisoned rulers can touch one another.[34]

This emphasis on history as a record of repeated failures provides a political context where Zhou's collapse meant that world mastery was attainable, and all of Qin's potential rivals had already failed.

The text also insists upon the fact that the long-term trend of history is the steady reduction in the number of states, once again using the history of failure to point towards the prospect of unification.[35] This supports the idea that the book was composed in the light of the prospect of imminent Qin world mastery (which was only two decades away), and that its theory of history is a programme for Qin's ascent to world rule.

As earlier scholars have noted, the *Lüshi chunqiu* is the first book to elaborate the theory, attributed to Zou Yan, that the cyclic alternation of the Five Phases underpinned the rise and fall of dynasties. A long passage at the beginning of the chapter 'Resonating with the Identical' (*ying tong*) elaborates the idea that the rise of each new ruler—the Yellow Emperor, Yu (of the Xia dynasty), Tang (of the Shang), and Wen (of the Zhou)—was signalled by Heaven through omens indicating the natural power under which he would rule.[36] This passage links the fifth phase, water, to no dynasty, but leaves it as the patron phase of the state that would replace Zhou. It thus again prophesies the rise of Qin to universal empire,

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[32] *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, trans. John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel (Stanford, 2000), 294, 342, 377–8, 443, 489.
[33] Ibid., 373–7.　　[34] Ibid., 378.　　[35] Ibid., 378, 490.　　[36] Ibid., 283.

and justifies the adoption of the power of water as Qin's natural patron. In the guise of embracing a new theory of the cosmic underpinnings of political changes, the text posits a history of repeated failures as a background to Qin's emergence as the ideal state that is elaborated throughout the text.

Virtually all aspects of the ideal state articulated in the text are given an historical background detailing their origins in antiquity or their successful adaptations in recent times. Sometimes the accounts take on a cosmological aspect, in which the model offered to the Qin ruler is assigned an origin at the beginning of time. A notable example is music, which is celebrated as an element of the political order through arguments drawn from diverse philosophical traditions. The chapter 'Great Music' (*da yue*) begins with a poem on the cosmic origins of music:

> The origins of music
> Lie in the distant past.
> Born of measurement,
> Founded by Grand One (the god *tai yi*).
> Grand One brought forth the Dyadic Couple,
> The Dyadic Couple brought forth Yin and Yang.
> Yin and Yang metamorphize and transform,
> The one rising, the other falling,
> Joined together in a perfect pattern.[37]

This rapturous celebration of the divine nature of music goes on to describe music as the 'invariable principle of nature' that follows the eternal cycles of Heaven and Earth. It also describes how everything in the world has its own distinctive sound, so that the totality of the universe is a structure of harmony.

This cosmic origin is followed, although not immediately, by the transfer of music from the realm of natural pattern to the human world, ultimately by the sages. The earliest music was developed by primitive tribes. The first tribe confronted an excess of yang-wind, and used music to attract the counterbalancing yin. A later tribe, confronted with an excess of yin that caused the waters in the earth to coagulate and people's muscles and bones to constrict, invented a dance to guide the yin energies into motion (anticipating the later *dao yin* exercises). Fully elaborated music was introduced by the Yellow Emperor, who had his servant Ling Lun establish the musical gamut. The latter cut twelve bamboo tubes to different lengths, then went to the foot of Kunlun Mountain, which linked Heaven to Earth:

He heard the calls of the male and female phoenixes, which he used to divide the twelve pitch-standards; six corresponding to the calls of the male, and six to the female....The Yellow Emperor subsequently commanded that Ling Lun, together with Rong Jiang, cast twelve bells with which to harmonize the five basic notes and perform the 'Yingshao' music.[38]

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[37] Ibid., 136–7.   [38] Ibid., 146–8.

Here the natural calls of the phoenix are transferred to the crafted bamboo, and from this still natural substance to the artificial system of the bells, which provide the first fully elaborated human music. The balance of the chapter 'Music of the Ancients' (*gu yue*) describes how each sage and dynastic founder in turn introduced new music, often patterned on the natural world or used to guide natural forces.

While music expressed natural pattern, and the sages all created proper musical forms, the text also elaborates the differences between the suitable music of well-run states, and the extravagant or corrupt music of doomed states. The authors describe the different types of music produced in times of order or disorder, and also list historical examples of both.[39] Thus the history of music moves from its natural prototypes, through its introduction into the human world by ancient peoples and sages, to end as an alternating creator or sign of the order and disorder that mark the rise and fall of states. Like the more general statements on history, the discussion of music provides a historical scenario that criticizes the rulers of the late Warring States, and offers Qin the possibility of creating a perfected state through adopting correct models.

This model, with nature or the cosmos providing the ultimate standards for proper action, while human history offers examples and minatory lessons, is applied by the *Lüshi chunqiu* to the diverse aspects of statecraft that it adopted from the philosophical traditions. Cultivating the human body, offering education, using weapons, creating human relations in rituals, practising agriculture, and all the other roles performed by a good state are elucidated through examples drawn from the history of the rise and fall of states by which the text demonstrates its programmes. The road from natural origins, through the work of the sages, and the tumult of earlier successes and failures, finds its destination in the grand synthesis of the tools of statecraft by a universal Qin regime.

One final aspect of the theory of history in the *Lüshi chunqiu* that is linked to the emergence of the empire is the emphasis on adapting to the times. The idea that the world was constantly changing, and that the successful ruler was the one who met these changes by modifying laws or practices, was shared by the philosophical traditions of Warring States China, and it forms a major element of the Qin synthesis.[40] The idea is applied even to agriculture, which is the topic of the last four chapters. The final chapter of the book 'Examining the Season' (*shen shi*) uses the character *shi* ('time' or 'season') no fewer than twenty-three times, as it insists that success in agriculture depends on 'obtaining the proper season/time'. Not only is matching the time necessary for a good harvest, but grain thus obtained will taste better, and it will sharpen the senses and the intelligence. The emphasis on the pivotal importance of timing in agriculture is

[39] Ibid., 140–5.
[40] Mark Edward Lewis, 'Les rites comme trame de l'histoire', in Viviane Alleton and Alexei Volkov (eds.), *Notions et perceptions du changement en Chine* (Paris, 1994).

extended as a metaphor or model for the ruler. Thus, military affairs required adjusting to circumstances by capturing the proper time for changes.[41]

However, the most important context for recognizing and responding to changes was political. The most frequently cited examples appear in what are conventionally called the 'legalist' texts, *Shang Jun shu* [The Book of Lord Shang] and the *Han Feizi*.[42] Both texts, which are cumulative compositions dating from the late Warring States through the early Han, are associated with Qin through the careers of their eponyms. *Shang Jun shu* begins with a chapter portraying a debate at the Qin court over the propriety of changing the state's laws. One of Lord Shang's speeches gives the clearest formulation of the late Warring States doctrine of the inevitability of change and the necessity of adaptation:

Former generations did not share the same doctrines; which antiquity shall we take as a standard? The emperors and kings did not repeat each other; to which convention should we conform? Fu-hsi and Shen-nung taught and did not punish; the Yellow Emperor, Yao and Shun punished but spared the families of the condemned. Coming down to Kings Wen and Wu, each established standards fitted to the times, instituted convention as affairs prompted them. Since conventions and standards were fixed according to the times, restrictions and commands were appropriate to the circumstances.... T'ang and Wu rose to kingship without following antiquity, Yin and Hsia (Xia) fell without change of conventions.

This passage, like related ones from the *Han Feizi*, argues against using an idealized antiquity as a model. The institutions of the ancient kings were suitable for those times, but as circumstances change, laws and institutions must also be changed.

To explain constant change in the past, the *Han Feizi* emphasized the rise in population, which increased competition for resources, and thus necessitated stricter laws and more government interference in people's lives. *Shang Jun shu*, for its part, elaborated a three-stage political anthropology. In the most ancient times there were no lineages, so people knew only their mothers and defended only their immediate kin. This was the competition of each against all. As population expanded, such selfish people constantly fought, so they sought out worthy men to act as arbitrators. This led to the elevation of the worthy, which was effectively the domination of village elders and the sort of society advocated by Confucians. Soon men began to struggle over who was the most worthy, so new sages arose. They established divisions of properties and those between genders, which were imposed through legal regulations enforced by punishments. This represented the historical rise of states, and was the sort of society advocated by

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[41] *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, 199, 662–7; and Sellmann, *Timing and Rulership in Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*, 120–6.

[42] The passages cited from these books, and other relevant ones, are gathered in A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle, Ill., 1989), 270–3.

the legalists. Thus history witnessed a gradual evolution of new political forms to control ever more violent conflict.

The *Lüshi chunqiu* espoused a similar model. The clearest expression of this is the chapter 'Examining the Present' (*cha jin*), which begins with the question, 'Why do rulers not adopt the laws of the Former Kings?' It argues that the laws of the ancient kings are separated from the present through the constant evolution of language and of custom: 'As a general principle, the laws of the Former Kings are bound up with the age in which they were created; but the age that created these laws has not survived along with them. Although the influence of the laws reaches to the present, it still is not proper to adopt them.' This chapter concludes with the famous story of the man who dropped his sword in the river. Hoping to mark the place where he had dropped it, he notched the side of the moving boat where the sword had fallen. This, the text argues, was the same as using ancient laws to govern a state.[43]

This insistence on changing institutions to meet new circumstances developed in the Warring States in the context of the rise of the territorial state and the elimination of the Zhou nobility; it also justified Qin's institutional reforms following the unification. This is indicated in Sima Qian's account of the Qin court's debates following its military triumphs. The necessity of reforms to suit new circumstances is cited by the First Emperor to explain his assumption of the new title of 'emperor' after he had conquered the final enemy state. This is followed by the introduction of numbers and colours at the court corresponding to the ascent of the phase 'water', under which Qin would replace the Zhou. This, as noted above, was yet another theory of history articulated in the *Lüshi chunqiu*. The impropriety of following the laws of earlier times also justified the emperor's decision to reject those at court who called for the granting of fiefs on the Zhou model, and to follow those advocating the universal imposition of administrative districts.[44] This approach to history was also consistent with the Qin inscriptions, which insisted on the radical break between the world of competing states and that of the unified empire, and argued that the new state would secure its rule through the imposition of institutional reforms.

Thus the theories of history in the *Lüshi chunqiu*, or the earlier works synthesized in it, *did* provide some guidance to Qin's understanding of its own history and the new policies demanded in response to unification. Moreover, the theory of constant adaptation as the structure of history was carried from the Qin court into the subsequent Han regime by the Qin academics who designed the rituals of the early Han court and served as tutors to the heir apparent. Thus Shusun Tong, chief architect of Han court ritual, asserted that 'the Five Emperors of antiquity all had different types of court music and dance; the kings of the Three Dynasties by no means followed the same rituals'. He also defended

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[43] *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, 368–71.
[44] Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian: Qin Dynasty*, 42–4.

himself against conservative ritualists with the argument that 'the times have changed'.[45] This shows that the models of history adopted at the Qin court became part of the intellectual repertoire of scholars during the early decades of the empire.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has sketched how the forms of recording the past that had developed during the Eastern Zhou were adapted to the Qin unification. Each of these forms either explicitly articulated, or reflected in their structure, the idea that the achievement of unification marked a turning point in world history. Thus, the new political world created by Qin's conquest had within a few decades also been articulated as a transformative event in the account of the human past.

The most ancient form of Chinese records that survived into the Eastern Zhou, ritual pronouncements announcing achievements to the spirits in order to secure their approval and blessing, carried forward in the form of inscriptions placed on the summits and high points of newly conquered lands. These stone inscriptions, which were the culmination and script of a ritual procession and ascent, proclaimed that Qin's unification of the world marked an epochal moment. Eliminating all rival states, Qin claimed to have ended the bloody wars that had marked all of human history. In their place, Qin established an eternal regime of universal order, whose blessings reached the entire world and descended even to the lowliest animal.

At the same time, the Qin conquest eliminated all the rival chronicles and the multiple year-counting systems that had fragmented early Chinese accounts of the passage of time. Establishing its chronicle as the sole standard, Qin created a single, abstracted dimension of time in which all people could recognize the sequence or simultaneity of any events. Although the division of the empire would occasionally lead to two or three competing chronologies, the idea of a single, unified time marked out by the genealogical sequence of rulers and the numerical counting of their reigns became accepted throughout later Chinese history.

Finally, records and interpretations of the past in Warring States philosophical texts were reworked just before the unification in the grand synthesis of the *Lüshi chunqiu*. This text synthesized the teachings of the rival philosophical traditions as a resource for policy formulation to be presented to the young king who became the First Emperor. It described human history as a process of institutional creation and reform that would culminate in the formation of a unified

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[45] Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian*, vol. 1: *Early Years of the Han Dynasty*, trans. Burton Watson (New York, 1961), 293–94.

empire incorporating all philosophical wisdom into an ideal regime. It also demonstrated the principles of statecraft, with examples drawn from the historical record. The successes of earlier states offered models for emulation, and their far more frequent failures provided warnings against error. The *Lüshi chunqiu* also composed narratives of certain practices, such as music, tracing their natural origins, their elaboration by the sages, and their modifications in historic time. It developed the idea of a sequence of dynasties in which each expressed the energetic powers enumerated as the Five Phases. Finally, the text embraced the doctrine of the necessity of constantly adapting institutions to the changing times. In this way it provided a philosophical foundation to the claims of the Qin court in the inscriptions that the establishment of the empire and its new institutions marked a pivotal moment in human history, and in the recording of that history.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

770–256 BC	Eastern Zhou Dynasty
770–481 BC	Spring and Autumn Era
480–221 BC	Warring States Era
*c.*240 BC	*Lüshi chunqiu* completed
221–206 BC	Qin Dynasty
202 BC–AD 8	Western Han Dynasty

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Chapter 19

Sima Qian and the *Shiji*

William H. Nienhauser, Jr.

The *Shiji* [Records of the Scribe] has been called China's national narrative. It is also one of two universal Chinese histories.[1] This huge text, containing over half a million words when it was written about 100 BC, included all of Chinese history from earliest times. Writing almost two centuries later, Wang Chong called it the 'Yellow River of books'.[2] Indeed, like the Yellow River it still flows, in modern times streaming through bookstores in all parts of China, and remaining one of the most popular histories among Chinese readers of all levels.

Conceived by Sima Tan during the last decades of the second century BC and completed by his son, Sima Qian, the *Shiji* is a personal account: in Qian's own words 'the interpretations of a single family'. How much the senior member of the family, Sima Tan, contributed to the text remains a matter for speculation. The work drew on nearly one hundred known sources. It certainly profited from access to the burgeoning imperial library created as a part of what Mark Edward Lewis has called 'the state-sponsored literary project' (see Lewis's chapter in this volume). Moreover, since Sima Qian was, like Herodotus, a great traveller, visiting almost every region of China in preparation for the work, the *Shiji* undoubtedly drew on a much larger corpus.[3] Despite the *Shiji*'s popularity over the centuries, scholars have continually debated its authorship, composition, transmission, and meaning. Those four topics will frame the discussion here as well.

BIOGRAPHY

Sima Qian was probably born in 145 BC. Two sources, both written by Qian himself, give information on his life.[4] The first is the autobiographical essay,

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[1] The other is Sima Guang's (1019–1086) *Zizhi tongjian*.

[2] Wang Chong, *Lun heng*, 29.4b (Siku quanshu ed.).

[3] This larger corpus must have included oral traditions. See Fujita Katushisa, 'Zhanguo shi ziliao de jichu yanjiu', in *Shiji Zhanguo shi yan jiu*, trans. Cao Feng and Hirose Kunio (Shanghai, 2008; from Japanese [Tokyo, 1997]), 22–64, on the various book collections which developed in the early Han, as well as recently unearthed texts, available to Sima Qian. On the historiography of Herodotus, see Jonas Greithlein in this volume.

[4] A few recent studies support an alternative birth date of 135, but both Shi Ding (*Sima Qian xingnian xinkao* [Xi'an, 1995]) and Burton Watson (*Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China*

'A Postface Written by the Honorable Grand Scribe Himself' (*Taishigong zixu*), included as the final (130th) chapter of the *Shiji*; the second is a letter he wrote to his friend, Ren An, in 93 BC ('Letter in Reply to Ren An'; *Bao Ren An shu*).[5]

Qian's life can be divided into four periods: (1) his youth spent in the Sima family home (145–127 BC), (2) the nearly two decades he spent studying, travelling, and beginning to work on the *Shiji* (126–109 BC), (3) the sixteen years in which he completed a draft of his history (108–93 BC), and (4) his final years during which he revised portions of his text.

Sima Qian's family had for generations served as *Taishi* (Grand Scribes)[6] under the Zhou dynasty. Their duties included observations of heavenly phenomena, the application of these phenomena in constructing calendars and determining auspicious dates, and the maintenance of some historical records.[7] But the idea of writing a comprehensive history of China, starting from the earliest reliable records and continuing down to contemporary times, originated only with Qian's father, Sima Tan.[8] Little is known of Tan's life. Although his grandfather, Sima Wuze, was in charge of a market in the capital city, Chang'an, it is likely Tan was born in the family home near the modern city of Hancheng on the western bank of the Yellow River in Shaanxi. The Simas had served the state of Jin, located east of the Yellow River in modern Shanxi, but Qian's branch of the family fled across the river to the state of Qin about 620 BC, settling there on the west bank.[9] Tan must have been first tutored by his father, Sima Xi,[10] later studying astronomy with Tang Du, the *Yijing* [Classic of Changes] with Yang He, and the Dao (Way) with Huangzi (Master Huang). The 'Postface' says Sima Tan became a court official between 140 and 110, but it is likely he was selected as one of the 'worthy and excellent' scholars promoted shortly after the 16-year-old Liu Che (Emperor Wu, r. 140–87 BC) ascended the throne. Since the court was dominated by the emperor's grandmother, Empress Dowager Dou, a strong supporter of Huang-Lao thought, Tan's study with Master Huang made his recommendation for a court position probable. Sima Tan is known to later

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[New York, 1958], 206 n. 40) concur that 145 is the generally accepted birth date. The best English-language account of Sima Qian's life is Watson's *Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China*, but succinct, perceptive accounts are offered by Stephen W. Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian* (Albany, 1995), pp. xi–xxi; and Grant Hardy, *Worlds of Bronze and Bamboo, Sima Qian's Conquest of History* (New York, 1994), 14–26.

[5] The letter is included in Ban Gu's biography of Sima Qian in the *Hanshu*, but this biography is clearly derived from the 'Postface'. Both the 'Postface' and the letter have been translated by Watson in *Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China*, 42–67.

[6] Although this is the author's own translation of *Taishi*, official titles are generally translated according to Hans Bielenstein, *The Bureaucracy of Han Times* (Cambridge, 1980).

[7] Sima Jin, among several of Qian's ancestors, served in the military (under the Qin).

[8] Recently two dates have been proposed for Sima Tan's birth: 177 BC and 165 BC. Both remain speculative.

[9] The Simas settled in Xiayang (cf. 'Postface', *Shiji*, 130.3286 n. 7).

[10] He was accorded the noble title *Wu Dafu* (Fifth Grand Man) and, like all the other Simas in this branch, lived at Gaomen near Hancheng.

generations as the Prefect of the Grand Scribes (*Taishiling*), but his initial position may have been as a Subordinate Scribe (*Taishicheng*).[11] When, in 139 BC, Emperor Wu caused plans for his mausoleum to commence (to be located at the new town of Maoling near the capital), the Grand Scribe's office must have been intricately involved in selecting sites and dates for the construction.

When Sima Qian came to the capital to join his father is a matter of conjecture. The 'Postface' says he took part in the farming and pasturing on the family's lands as a child, and that by the age of 10 he was thoroughly conversant with 'ancient writings' (*guwen*),[12] probably referring to specific texts such as the *Shangshu* [Venerated Documents].[13] With the founding of the Han, the Chancellor Xiao He had noted that the Prefect of the Grand Scribes was responsible for examining young scholars and that 'only those who are able to read aloud and write out from memory more than nine thousand graphs can become scribes'.[14] The test also demanded familiarity with the six styles (*liu ti*) of writing characters. This provides an idea of what the young Qian's training must have been like. Qian probably came to Chang'an in the mid-130s, not long after his father. He could first have studied either with Tan or some other scholar. By 127 BC the entire family had been moved to Maoling by imperial order to help populate the new town with distinguished and powerful families and, at the same time, to bring these families under closer court supervision. This year begins the second period of Qian's life, during which he lived with his father and probably worked with him on the draft that later became the *Shiji.*

Residing near the capital and hearing about court life from his father was Qian's introduction to Emperor Wu and his policies. The young emperor (born in 156 BC) was only a decade older than Qian but ruled through all but the last year of Qian's life. It is perhaps in part with contemporary politics in mind that plans for Sima Tan's history evolved. As numerous chapters in the *Shiji* make clear, the impressions of Emperor Wu's reign on the Sima father and son were far from positive. Whereas in depicting the early years of the Han dynasty the *Shiji* devotes several chapters to the first chancellors (including a history of the position from *c*.200–155 BC in chapter 96), of the twelve chancellors who served under Emperor Wu only four were accorded biographies. By de-emphasizing the role of the highest Han official post in his accounts of these years, Sima Qian suggests the dominance of imperial relatives on Emperor Wu's long rule, as well as of lower-ranking officials who garnered power by bowing to the emperor's

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[11] The *Suishu* (27.905) states that the position of *Taishiling* was established by Emperor Wu; given the long service of the Sima clan as Zhou scribes, it may have been created for Sima Tan.

[12] *Shiji* (Beijing, 1959), 130.3293.

[13] Sima Zhen, author of the 'Soyin' commentary, suggests this refers to Qian's study with Fu Sheng (Master Fu) of the ancient-script version of the *Shangshu*, but as Master Fu was in his nineties in the 170s, this is unlikely (*Shiji*, 130.3294 n. 3). Others suggest *guwen* refers to the texts which later became the *Zuozhuan*, *Guoyu*, and *Shiben.*

[14] *Hanshu* (Beijing, 1962), 30.1720–1.

goals: enforcing exacting economic and legal measures at home, and carrying out his expansionist policies in the marches.

Thus, in chapters such as the 'Biography of Dou Ying and Tian Fen' (chapter 107), Qian portrays the control exercised by Emperor Wu's grandmother (Empress Dowager Dou) and by his mother (Empress Dowager Wang) over the first fifteen years of Emperor Wu's rule. In the 'Biographies of the Harsh Officials' (chapter 122), and especially in the account of Zhang Tang there, he depicts the backbiting and corruption that distinguished the men who played a major role in the next two decades. Even when the life of a later chancellor, Shi Qing (serving from 112 until his death in 103), is portrayed, it is subordinated to that of his father, Shi Fen (see chapter 103), further suggesting the secondary role of the position under Emperor Wu. Shi Qing's successor, Gongsun He, accepted the chancellorship with reluctance, realizing that three of his four immediate predecessors in the post had been caused to commit suicide.[15] Those officials, like Ji An, who were willing to openly risk criticism of contemporary policies—Ji opposed the Emperor's aggressive policy towards the Xiongnu tribes on the northern frontier—quickly fell from favour.

Aside from absorbing an education through his attention to court politics, Sima Qian also greatly expanded his knowledge in this period through formal study and extensive travels. Within two years of the move to Maoling, at age 20, he set out to explore his world, travelling through regions drained by the Yangtze, Xiang, Yuan, Huai, Si, and Yellow rivers (essentially the eastern and southern parts of what was then the Han empire, often retracing the footsteps of the First Emperor of Qin), visiting famous mountains and historic sites, and graves of former worthies, collecting legends, learning regional customs and lore from local elders, and experiencing the cultures and social practices of many areas and peoples.[16] He returned to Chang'an in 122 BC. Besides these oral sources, he may also have gained access to provincial libraries such as that collected by Liu De, the king of Henan from 155–130 BC, or that of Liu An in Huainan (r. 164–122 BC).[17]

After his return to the capital, Sima Qian studied the *Shangshu* under Kong Anguo[18] and the *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals] under Dong Zhongshu.[19]

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[15] Li Cai (chancellor from 121) took his life in 118 BC, his successor, Zhuang Qingti, in 115, and the last to die at his own hands was Zhao Zhou, Shi Qing's predecessor. Even Shi Qing's 'natural' death may have been related to his harassment at court.

[16] Gathering 'the old traditions of the world that were scattered and lost' ('Postface', *Shiji*, 130.3319). On the similarity of Qian's routes to those of the First Emperor see Hardy, *Worlds of Bronze and Bamboo*, 256 n. 43.

[17] On these collections, see Fujita, Zhanguo shi ziliao de jichu yanjiu', 25.

[18] *Hanshu*, 88.3607.

[19] Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror*, 5, notes that some modern scholars believe Sima Tan and Dong Zhongshu were rivals. See also William H. Nienhauser, Jr., 'For Want of a Hand: A Note on the "Hereditary House of the Jin" and Sima Qian's "Chunqiu"', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 127 (2007), 1–20.

He also received his first official position, that of palace gentleman (*langzhong*), no later than 118 BC.[20] Though his rank was low, the post afforded access to the emperor (as a palace guard and a member of the retinue that accompanied the sovereign when he travelled) and contact with other talented young palace gentlemen, such as Ren An and Tian Ren, both of whom Sima Qian befriended. In this capacity Qian (along with his father, Tan) went with Emperor Wu on a number of tours of inspection. Perhaps in part because he was known as a seasoned traveller, Sima Qian was sent in 111 BC as imperial envoy to inspect and pacify local tribes in modern Sichuan and Yunnan.[21] Once again he collected information that was useful, not only to the court, but to his later work on the *Shiji* (the story of the widow named Qing of Ba and Shu in chapter 129 and other material in the 'The Biographies of the Money-makers' certainly derive from this mission). Thus after this year-long sojourn, Sima Qian, still in his mid-thirties, had not only mastered the classics and had the opportunity to converse with some of the outstanding scholars of his day, but had also travelled throughout the empire. When he returned to the capital in the spring of 110 BC he found his father, who had set out in Emperor Wu's retinue on a trip to worship at Taishan, seriously ill. Sima Tan, forced to break off from the emperor's retinue and remain in Luoyang, realizing he was dying and would not complete the historical project he had set himself, enjoined Qian 'not to forget the writings which I intended to arrange and compile'. After his father's death, however, Qian rejoined the emperor on the journey to perform the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices at Mount Tai (modern Shandong), and then accompanied him along the eastern seacoast, returning through modern Hebei, Inner Mongolia, and Shaanxi, to the capital.

Three years after his father's death in 108 BC, Sima Qian replaced Tan as Grand Scribe. This also marks the start of the third era in Qian's life, in which he compiled a complete draft of the *Shiji.* The new position as Grand Scribe afforded him access to the imperial library and archives, collections which had been steadily enlarged throughout the first century of Han rule.[22] Although Sima Qian's travels have led scholars to label him as a Chinese Herodotus,[23] his careful use of these rich written sources reveals a scholarly nature equally reminiscent of Tacitus. This combination of sources transcended not only temporal, but regional bounds. Despite this preparation and the urgency he may have felt, Sima Qian was soon involved in planning and compiling a new calendar to replace the Xia calendar, which must have occupied most of his time. Qian and his colleagues were also to determine a new dynastic colour for the Han, and

[20] As Shi Ding, *Xinkao*, 20–22, argues.
[21] 'Postface', *Shiji*, 130.3293. On the possibilities that his mission also included a military objective, see Shi Ding, *Xinkao*, 26.
[22] See Fujita Katsuhisa's discussion in 'Zhanguo shi ziliao de jichu yanjiu', esp. 23–28.
[23] See S. Y. Teng, 'Herodotus and Ssu-ma Chien: Two Fathers of History', *East and West*, n.s., 12 (1961), 233–40; and Siep Stuurman, 'Herodotus and Sima Qian: History and the Anthropological Turn in Ancient Greece and Han, China', *Journal of World History*, 19:1 (2008), 1–40.

revise other related ritual systems. Although Sima Qian gives no information about enemies at court, his work on the calendar was criticized by Ni Kuan, and thereafter several new scholars were brought in to complete what came to be known as the Great Beginning Calendar (*Taichu li*; after the name of the then current reign era, 104–101 BC).[24] This project must have slowed work on the *Shiji*. It also reveals that Sima Qian was perhaps a better historian than astronomer.

The five years between 103 and 99 BC are thought to have been the period in which Sima Qian worked intensively on his history. At this time he was also engaged in organizing the imperial collection of documents and archives. As noted above, Qian was opposed to the military campaigns, and domestic exactions to support them. Thus the return of the famed general Li Guang in 101 BC from a disastrous four-year campaign in the north-west may have spurred Sima Qian to extend the *annus terminus* for his history from 122 to 101 BC to allow him to point out the follies of this and other policies of the current emperor.[25] By 99 BC the basic draft of the *Shiji* had probably been completed.

Although a minor official, Sima Qian did have a voice at court. Thus in 99 BC, when the general Li Ling surrendered to the Xiongnu, Qian defended him against those who were recommending Li's execution.[26] There was a precedent of sorts in the case of General Su Jian (d. *c.*120 BC). In a campaign against the Xiongnu in 124, Su Jian's entire force was wiped out, and he was the only survivor to return to his commander, Wei Qing. Many of Wei's lieutenants argued that Su should have died with his men, and called for his execution. Others urged lenience because Su had not defected or surrendered to the enemy. Wei Qing deferred, sending Su back to the court for sentencing. Although Su Jian was subsequently condemned to death, he was able to redeem himself by paying a fine and becoming a commoner. Perhaps Qian hoped for a similar fate for Li Ling. Moreover, Qian may have attempted to press his opposition to the military campaigns in general in his defence of Li Ling. This would also have provided an opportunity for the pro-military faction to condemn him. In any case, when it was decided the following year to execute Li Ling and his entire clan, Sima Qian was implicated in the case, imprisoned, and condemned to death. Such a condemnation offered two alternatives: pay a huge fine or suffer castration. Unable to buy his freedom, Sima Qian submitted himself to prison and castration—a punishment so base that he considered there was 'no greater disgrace'.[27]

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[24] This is the so-called *Nongli* or 'Agricultural Calendar' that is still in use today.

[25] These two distinct 'final years' for the narrative are indicated in the 'Postface' (*Shiji*, 130.3300 and 130.3321).

[26] Sima Qian's detailed defence is cited in Li Ling's biography, *Hanshu*, 54.2455–6, as well as in his own letter to Ren An (*Hanshu*, 62.2725–36). At the time of Qian's trial, the most powerful court officials were Chancellor Gongsun He and Grandee Secretary Wang Qing. Gongsun was too closely tied to the emperor to have been an effective voice for Qian, and Wang was himself tried and executed in 98 BC for an unknown offence. Thus the sentencing of Qian seems to have been Emperor Wu's own design.

[27] *Hanshu*, 62.2727.

He spent more than a year in prison, but upon his release was made Prefect of Palace Writers (*Zhongshu ling*), a personal secretary for the emperor and a conduit between the crown and the Secretariat (*Shangshu*). Duties included transmitting imperial commands and recasting petitions or memorials. Normally held by a eunuch, this position in essence marked a promotion, and possibly an acknowledgment by Emperor Wu that Qian's original sentence had been too harsh.

Little is known of Sima Qian's last years, the fourth and final period of his life. A work entitled 'Rhapsody on a Gentleman Not Meeting His Time' (*Bei shi bu yu fu*)[28] may have been written at this time, although it was not presented at court. The *Suishu* bibliography (29.1034) says the 'Honorable Grand Scribe' had a 'Ten-thousand-year Calendar' (*Wansui li*) in one *juan* (*voluminis*—fascicles or scrolls—originally a bundle of bamboo slips), presumably Sima Qian's work. The same bibliography (30.1056) also lists a 'collected works' of Sima Qian in one *juan*.[29] Ban Gu was effusive about Sima Qian's learning, including him with Confucius, Mencius, Liu Xiang and Yang Xiong, as writers who 'had the broad learning and wide experience to link the ancient and modern and their discussions to have benefit to the world';[30] elsewhere Ban pairs Qian's literary talent with that of the great poet Sima Xiangru (no relation to Sima Qian).[31]

Aside from belletristic writings, Sima Qian certainly had the opportunity to revise his history in these final years. In his own words, he (and his father) had 'gathered up and brought together the old traditions of the world which were scattered and lost…studying the actions and events (in them), investigating the principles behind success and failure, rise and decay, in 130 chapters, intending thereby to examine the boundaries between (history being shaped by) heaven or men, to comprehend the reasons for political changes from ancient times down to modern, and to complete (a work that contained) the opinions (or "interpretations") of a single family.'[32] Although the word *yan* can mean simply 'words', here it suggests *yan lun* 言論, opinions on politics and other affairs. *Jia*, similarly, can be read as 'school',[33] but Sima Qian used it in the basic sense of family, indicating that his history was not merely a transmission of ancient traditions,

[28] Cited in the *Yiwen leiju* (Shanghai, 1983), 30:541. On the authenticity of this piece, see Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror*, 160 n. 44. James R. Hightower has translated the piece in his 'The Fu of T'ao Ch'ien', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 17 (1954), 197–200.

[29] Perhaps this contained his *fu*; there is also a letter ascribed to Qian, urging a friend to return to court, first cited in the much later *Gaoshi zhuan*, B.13b–14a (Siku quanshu ed.).

[30] *Hanshu*, 36.1972.

[31] *Hanshu*, 58.2623. See also Stephen W. Durrant in this volume. Durrant points out the criticism which Ban Gu aimed at Sima Qian's style, format, and ideology. But since Ban's own history is in large part based on the *Shiji*, whatever his critique, he recognized that the *Shiji* was the basic source for early Chinese history.

[32] *Hanshu*, 62.2735.

[33] This is as Burton Watson and others have translated it. But this leaves such translators with an obvious contradiction since, as Watson himself declares in *Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China,* 151: '(Sima Qian's writing) no matter how one forces it, will produce no "system" of thought.'

but an interpretation of those traditions created by the Sima family, father and son. In the discussion of the meaning of the text below, these interpretations will be further explored. It is worth noting that a few lines after Qian mentions that the work contained 130 chapters, he laments that he still had not completed his work. Some scholars believe this indicated he was planning to enlarge the scope of his history, but it is more likely that there were chapters that were still in draft form when he died.[34]

COMPOSITION

In his 'Postface', Sima Qian himself gives an account of the order and purpose of the various sections that came to make up the *Taishigong shu* [Documents of the Grand Scribe], as the *Shiji* was first titled:

Then the Han arose and after Xiao He put in order the laws and ordinances; Han Xin set forth the rules of warfare, Zhang Cang made the regulations and standards, and Shusun Tong stabilized the rites and ceremonies, refined scholars of textual learned began to be presented (to the emperor) and the *Shijing* (Classic of Poetry) and *Shangshu* (Venerated Documents) gradually reappeared. From the time when Cao Can recommended Master Gai's teachings of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi, when Master Jia (Yi) and Chao Cuo elucidated the doctrines of (the Legalists) Shen (Buhai) and (Lord) Shang, and Gongsun Hong achieved eminence for his classical learning, in the space of one hundred years, the writings that were passed down and the records of old affairs were without exception all collected by the Grand Scribes. The Grand Scribes, father and son, each in turn held and carried on this position.[35]

This description of how Sima Qian compiled his history argues that the Simas' work would lend history the same order that Xiao He, Han Xin, and the others had provided their areas of expertise. Qian introduces the subgenres: the twelve 'basic annals' (*benji*) which trace chronologically the rulers of China from earliest antiquity down to Qian's own Emperor Wu; the ten 'chronological tables' (*nian-biao*) which display all the major events of each year in the various political entities that made up China throughout the ages; another ten 'treatises' (*shu*) which are historical accounts of subjects such as 'music', 'ritual', or 'geography'; then thirty 'hereditary houses' (*shijia*) which follow the development of the

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[34] In his letter to Ren An, Sima Qian states that although he had compiled 130 chapters, 'it was a shame it (his history) had not been completed' (*Hanshu*, 62.2735). Chapters such as 60, 95, 96, 98, and 119 seem to be unfinished drafts. See also William H. Nienhauser, Jr., 'Tales of the Chancellor(s): The Grand Scribe's Unfinished Business', *Chinese Literature, Articles, Essays, Reviews*, 25 (2003), 99–117; and id., 'A Reexamination of "The Biographies of the Reasonable Officials" in the Records of the Grand Historian', *Early China*, 16 (1991), 209–33. Yang Haizheng, *Han Tang Shiji yanjiu lungao* (Jinan, 2003), 9, lists other traditional claims that the *Shiji* was never completed by Sima Qian.

[35] *Shiji*, 130.3319–20.

states of pre-Han China as well as the Han kingdoms; and finally seventy 'biographies' or 'memoirs' (*liezhuan*) which present interpretative accounts of hundreds of men and women and also of a few neighbouring peoples. Each chapter was shown to fit history as Sima Qian and his father meant to relate it.[36] Mark Edward Lewis has argued that there is a hierarchy from the annals which suggest a unified empire verifiable from earliest records, the tables representing noble lineages, the treatises offering a topical treatment of the material in the annals, the houses attempting to subsume a multi-state reality into the image of a strong central state, and the memoirs praising those men who accumulated merit and fame.[37] Yet as Grant Hardy has pointed out, the *Shiji* is more complex than any single interpretation.[38]

How the *Shiji* 'supplemented the Six Disciplines', 'assimilated different interpretations of the Six Classics', and 'put into order the miscellaneous sayings of the Hundred Schools' can also be seen in the respective comments to the introductory chapter of the 'basic annals'. At the end of the 'Basic Annals of the Five Emperors', Qian addresses the relationship between his work and the Six Classics:

Scholars often claim that the Five Emperors belonged to high antiquity. But the *Shangshu* only records Yao and (the rulers) thereafter. And when the scholars of the different schools talk about the Yellow Emperor, their words are not appropriate. Even civil officials or old masters would have trouble explaining this. What Confucius transmitted in his answer to Zai Yu's question…some Confucian scholars have not transmitted.[39] I once travelled west to Mount Kongtong and passed (Mount) Zhuolu to the north; to the east I drifted along the coast, and to the south I floated the Huai and the Jiang rivers. Wherever I went, all of the village elders would point out for me sites of the Yellow Emperor, Yao, and Shun. The traditions were certainly very different from each other. In sum, that which was not far from the ancient-text versions (of the Classics) tends to be plausible. What I have read in the *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals) (and) the *Guoyu* (Discourses of the States) sheds light on the 'Virtues of the Five Emperors' and the 'Surnames of the Successive Emperors'[40] and makes them clearer. Though they did not investigate the problem deeply, what they try to show is not without basis. The *Shangshu* missed some things and has certain deficiencies. What is missing there, from time to time, can be seen in other accounts. If one were not a person fond of pursuing and pondering deeply so as to conceive the ideas in his mind, one would certainly have a hard time to relate (history) to those who have only a superficial view and are ill-informed. I edited and selected these words which are the most appropriate. For these reasons, I put this as the first chapter of the 'basic annals'.[41]

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[36] The reasons for the compilation of each chapter are given earlier in the 'Postface' (*Shiji*, 130.3301–19).

[37] Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany, 1999), 309–11.

[38] Hardy, *Worlds of Bronze and Bamboo*, 22–26.

[39] In the *Da Dai liji*, 7.1a (Sibu congkan ed.) Confucius responds to Zai Yu's query about the claim that the Yellow Emperor lived three hundred years by suggesting that Zai's time would be better spent reading historical sources rather than speculating about myths.

[40] Two chapters of the *Da Dai liji*.   [41] *Shiji*, 1.46.

Although often compared to Herodotus, here in these detailed authorial comments on his sources and their deficiencies, Qian distinguishes himself from his Greek counterpart (see Jonas Greithlein in this volume). Qian's own account of these mythical five rulers demonstrates that he was able to add some details (concerning the machinations of Emperor Shun's father and brother in their attempts to kill Shun) for which no extant sources exist, suggesting that these may have come from oral traditions relayed to him by the 'village elders' he consulted in his travels.

The historian's comments following 'The Biographies of Guan Zhong and Yan Ying' (chapter 62) explain how Qian went about 'giving order to the miscellaneous sayings of the Hundred Schools':

I have read Mr. Guan (Zhong)'s 'Shepherding the People,' 'Mountains are High,' 'Chariots and Horses,' 'Light and Heavy,' and 'Nine Bureaus,'[42] and the *Yanzi chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals of Master Yan).[43] With such detail have they spoken of matters. Since I have seen their writings, I wanted to observe the way they put things into practice and have for this reason composed biographies of them. As for their writings, many people today have copies, and because of this I have not selected (from) them, but instead have selected some neglected stories.[44]

Indeed, 'neglected stories' or 'anecdotes' (*yi shi*) form the basis of a number of the biographies in the *Shiji*.[45]

Yet while Qian's comments explain some aspects of his intentions and methods, they leave a number of questions unanswered. For example, did he or his father Tan create these sub-genres? Much has been written about his sources, but it would seem that the general idea for a multi-genre study of earlier history, and perhaps even some of the sub-generic categories, came from Lü Buwei's *Lüshi chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals of Mr Lü], as his biography in the *Shiji* relates. Sima Qian explains how Lü attempted to match those other states whose lords maintained huge corps of knights and retainers:

Lü Buwei, ashamed that Qin with its might was not their equal, summoned knights and treated them lavishly; in the end his retainers numbered 3000. At the time [*c.*250 BC] there were many orators among the feudal states, such as Excellency Xun [Xunzi] and his followers, who wrote books and spread them throughout the world. Lü Buwei thus had each of his retainers record their knowledge, then compiled and edited it into

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[42] These are chapters in the version of the *Guanzi* that Sima Qian consulted; some have different titles in, or have been lost from, the received version of *Guanzi*.

[43] Attributed to Yan Ying but probably compiled by his disciples. Cf. Stephen W. Durrant, 'Yen tzu ch'un ch'iu', in Michael Loewe (ed.), *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley, 1993), 486–7.

[44] *Shiji*, 62.2136.

[45] The tradition of using anecdotes as a means of characterization has ancient origins and is especially evident in collective biographies such as 'Memoirs of the Assassins' (ch. 86) or 'Memoirs of the Reasonable Officials' (ch. 119). On the role of the anecdote in early historical narrative, see David Schaberg in this volume.

eight 'Surveys' (*lan*), six 'Discourses' (*lun*), and twelve 'Records' (*ji*), in all over 200,000 characters. He thought that these writings held all the affairs of Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things, ancient and modern, and called them the *Lüshi chunqiu*.[46]

While these genres are not identical to those found in the *Shiji*, the diversity and size of the *Lüshi chunqiu* may well have proved a model for the Simas.

Sima Qian did not of course enjoy the assistance of the three thousand retainers that Lü Buwei had at his disposal. The physical difficulties that must have confronted Sima Qian in citing 'sources' were immense. Where did he work? His sources must have included many texts written on bamboo and wooden slips tied together into *juan* or fascicles, each text of a considerable size. Fujita Katsuhisa estimates the size of the *Shiji* itself as over 21,000 bamboo slips,[47] and Grant Hardy has noted that 'it would have taken a cart to contain it.'[48] Although the source texts the Simas employed were not as large, nevertheless in working on, for example, the history of a particular pre-Qin state, earlier versions of what became the *Zuozhuan* [Zuo Tradition], *Guoyu* [Discourses of the States], and *Shiben* [Basics of Hereditary Lines] had to be consulted. To open (unroll) relevant passages of these texts simultaneously and still allow room for the *Shiji* 'draft text' must have required a huge room, presumably in or near the imperial library where the source documents must have been stored. Given the precedent of Lü Buwei's 'team' in compiling the *Lüshi chunqiu*, would it not be reasonable to assume that Sima Qian had assistance in preparing his drafts? He certainly had assistants (taishicheng) when he was Prefect of the Grand Scribes. This would also explain how the original manuscript and a copy of the *Shiji* (each containing over half a million Chinese characters—see the discussion below) could have been prepared in the final years of Qian's life, years in which he occupied a time-consuming high official post. Sima Qian himself is silent on his methods; the best discussion is by the modern scholar Ruan Zhisheng:

After the collected historical materials had been examined and corrected, it was still necessary to understand how to reorder and utilize them. The number of historical materials that had to be examined and corrected was enormous and their nature complex, so they had to be reordered and also appraised and selected for adoption (in the *Shiji*)....When Sima Qian was engaged in utilizing historical materials, he also had to go through this process of reordering, selecting, pruning, arranging, and realizing them into a text. It is just that he never explained this to us in detail in the *Shiji*.[49]

Those chapters of the Simas' history that were closely based on earlier sources (the early Basic Annals and Hereditary Houses—about twenty chapters in

⁴⁶ *Shiji*, 85.2510.
⁴⁷ Fujita, 'Zhanguo shi ziliao de jichu yanjiu', 40. Endymion Wilkinson suggests about 9,000 slips arranged into 150–300 bundles would have been enough. See Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* (rev. edn, Cambridge, Mass. 2000), 446 n. 2.
⁴⁸ Hardy, *Worlds of Bronze and Bamboo*, p. xi.
⁴⁹ Ruan Zhisheng, 'Taishigong zenyang souji he chuli shiliao', *Shumu jikan* 7:4 (March 1974), 29.

all), and were labelled 'dependent chapters' by Bernhard Karlgren, may have been drafted by assistants.[50] These assistants may also have aided him by bringing materials to and from his work area. Although work on the *Shiji* was not part of Sima Qian's official duties, it seems it was openly carried out (with only the composition of the basic annals for Emperor Wu done in secret).[51]

A third, and perhaps most essential question raised by Qian's depiction of the composition of his history is what part of it was actually written by Sima Tan. Zhang Dake provides a thorough discussion of this problem,[52] surveying the conclusions of Fang Bao, Wang Guowei, and four modern scholars on the subject, including Li Changzhi's contention that the 'Hereditary House of the State of Jin' could not have been written by Sima Qian since it contains the graph *tan* 談—a practice that would violate the taboo on using one's father's name. Zhang concludes by pointing out that while certain chapters either mention direct contact with people who were of Tan's generation or otherwise seem more likely to have been compiled by Tan, the issue remains clouded. Sima Tan must be credited as the designer of the project and to some sense the 'co-author' of the *Shiji*, but what he actually wrote cannot be determined by sources available today. Nevertheless, if Sima Qian is to be accorded the filial sensitivity of having avoided using his father's name, it would be natural to assume he would also have honoured his parent by listing in the 'Postface' those chapters his father had finished. He lists none.

A related question raised by Qian's account of the composition of his text is the size of the *Shiji*. In the 'Postface', Qian says his text contained 526,500 characters, but the received text today is considerably larger.[53] The solution to this, however, lies within the *Shiji*'s evolution over time, and will be addressed in the following section.

Did Sima Qian complete the *Shiji*? This is the conclusion drawn by most readers. Yet it seems some of the chapters (including the pre-Han chapters) are so poorly organized that they suggest the Grand Scribe may not have had time to polish them.[54] In finishing his work on the text, however, he tells us he left two versions: the original 'concealed at a famous mountain' (*cang zhi mingshan*) and a copy in the capital (*fu zai jingshi*).[55] Were these copies written on silk or slips

[50] Bernhard Karlgren, 'Sidelights on Si-ma Ts'ien's Language', *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 42 (1970), 297. On the possible role of assistants, see William H. Nienhauser, Jr., 'A Note on a Textual Problem in the *Shih chi* and Some Speculations concerning the Compilation of the Hereditary Houses', *T'oung Pao*, 89 (2003), 39–58.

[51] See Ban Gu's comment (and Yan Shigu's [581–645] interpretation) regarding the secrecy under which Sima Qian compiled the annals of Emperor Wu (*Hanshu*, 100B.4235 text and n 3).

[52] See 'Sima Tan zuoshi kao lunshu ping' in Zhang Dake's *Shiji yanjiu* (Beijing, 2002), 54–66.

[53] Chen Zhi, 'Han, Jin ren dui Shiji de chuanbo ji qi pingjia', in *Sima Qian yu Shiji lunji* (Xi'an, 1982), 221, estimates the extant *Shiji* text contains 600,000 characters.

[54] This seems to be the case for chapter 96 (see Nienhauser, 'Tales of the Chancellor(s)'), chapter 119 (see Nienhauser, 'A Reexamination of "The Biographies of the Reasonable Officials"'), as well as chapters 95 and 98.

[55] The final resting place of these two manuscripts has caused considerable speculation. Watson's claim that the 'famous mountain' referred (through allusion) to imperial archives seems

of bamboo or wood? In what calligraphic style were they first written?[56] For such a long text it might be expected that rather than the then standard clerical script (*li shu*), what Qiu Xigui has called 'cursory clerical script' may have been employed.[57] How was the copy of the original made? How would that have affected the transmission of the text? Which version—the original or the copy—has come down to us?

HISTORY OF THE TEXT

Such questions lead to the discussion of how the *Shiji* text evolved. From the time Sima Qian left the two copies of his *Taishigong shu*, textual problems began.[58] Regardless of whether Sima Qian himself made both copies of his history, or other hands were involved in writing out over one million Chinese characters, copying errors must have been made, resulting in two distinct autographs. It is thus possible that there are two equally distinct textual histories of the *Shiji*, at least during the Han dynasty.

Ban Gu offers a starting point for this discussion at the end of his biography of Sima Qian: 'After Qian died, his book came gradually to be known. During the time of Emperor Xuan (r. 73–49 BC), Qian's maternal grandson, Yang Yun (*fl.* 65–55 BC), the Marquis of Pingtong, reverently transmitted his (grandfather's) book, and it finally was promulgated from this.'[59] There are two problematic expressions in this text here. First, *shao chu* ('gradually came to be known'). Burton Watson translates it as 'came gradually to light',[60] which seems literally accurate. However, what does it mean in the Han dynasty for a 'book' to 'come gradually to light'? This may suggest that certain chapters, rather than the entire text, were released by the Yang family to interested parties. Yang Haizheng

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questionable (Watson, *Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China*, 214 n. 93), since the copy was said to have been in the capital, presumably in the archives (*Hanshu*, 62.2724). Yan Shigu does not specify the location, but comments (*Hanshu*, 62.2724n.): 'The reason that (one copy) was hidden in the mountains, was that he was afraid it would be lost. The second copy text was thus kept in the capital.' Chen Zhi ('Han, Jin ren dui Shiji de chuanbo ji qi pingjia', 215) has also suggested that the famous mountain refers to Sima Qian's hometown of Hancheng.

[56] Evidence in support of wooden or bamboo slips can be found in Wang Su's (AD 195–256) comments on the relationship between Sima Qian and Han Wudi put to him by Emperor Ming of the state of Wei (i.e. Cao Rui, r. 226–239). Wang explains that when Sima Qian was compiling the Shiji, Wudi 'took the basic annals of Xiao Jing and of himself and read them. Thereupon he was enraged, caused them (the slips) to be scraped clean, and had them thrown out' ('Wei zhi', in the *Sanguo zhi*, 13.418).

[57] Also known as *zuo shu* (assistant's script) or *shi shu* (scribal script), see Qiu Xigui, *Chinese Writing*, trans. Gilbert L. Mattos and Jerry Norman (Berkeley, 2000), 125. On the 'cursory clerical script' see ibid., 133.

[58] Two recent studies have contributed greatly to this discussion: Zhang Yüchun, *Shiji banben yanjiu* (Beijing, 2001); and Yang, *Han Tang Shiji yanjiu lungao*.

[59] *Hanshu*, 62.2737.   [60] Watson, *Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China*, 67.

argues that this was the case.[61] If this hypothesis is correct, then in the Han dynasty, and perhaps in later periods, the *Shiji* would have circulated chapter by chapter. It would have been a bulky text, even if copied onto silk, and the idea of disseminating it in smaller sections seems logical.[62] The second enigmatic expression is *zu shu*. Watson renders it 'worked to transmit and make known his work'; though such a rendering seems to ignore *zu* altogether and to expand *shu* into 'transmit and make known'. *Zu* can mean 'to respect as an ancestor' and *shu* has the idea of 'transmit', 'expound', or 'record'. Thus the passage should be understood as: 'After Qian had died his book gradually appeared. During the time of Emperor Xuan, Qian's maternal grandson Yang Yun, the Marquis of Pingtong, reverently transmitted his (grandfather's) book and it finally was promulgated from this.' This reading of *shu* (as in Confucius' famous phrase *shu er bu zuo*, 'I transmit but do not compose') might indicate that Yang Yun had the text copied out for the emperor. In any case, he was imitating Confucius who, in the *Zhong yong* [Doctrine of the Mean] is said to have '*zu shu* Yao Shun' ('I handed down the doctrines of Yao and Shun').[63] Regardless of what Yang Yun did with the text, the fact that the *Shiji* was in his possession reinforces Chen Zhi's claim that the 'famous mountain' location of the original text was in fact the Sima family home.[64]

About a century after Yang's 'publication' of the *Taishigong shu*,[65] Ban Gu notes that, although the text was widely circulated, ten chapters had been lost.[66] The Ban family seem to have had the entire text. Lu Zongli has argued that the *Shiji* was circulating throughout the Later Han and Jin, and that Ban Biao wrote what he himself called a continuation of it. By Xu Guang's time, various manuscripts were circulating.[67] Xu, who wrote one of the earliest commentaries on the *Shiji*, which Pei Yin cited often in his *Shiji ji jie* (the first of what was to become

[61] See Yang's *Han Tang Shiji yanjiu lungao*, 6. Yang deduces that this piecemeal transmission of the *Shiji* was one reason why some chapters were lost in the early stages of the *Shiji*'s history.

[62] Further evidence of this can be found in Emperor Guangwu's (r. 25–57) grant to Dou Rong (Rafe de Crespigny, *A Biographical Dictionary of Later Han to the Three Kingdoms (23–220 AD)* [Leiden, 2007], 166–9) of three separate chapters of the *Shiji* (*Hou Hanshu*, 23.803), and Emperor Ming's (r. 58–75) award to Wang Jing (fl. 60–85; de Crespigny, *Dictionary*, 818–9) of a copy of the *Shiji* treatise 'Hequ shu' in 69 for his work on the waterways connected to the Yellow River (*Hou Hanshu*, 76.2465).

[63] James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (Hong Kong, 1967), 1:427. *Shu* might also mean 'expounded', in which case Yang would have 'expounded the book (to the Emperor)' to mitigate what was seen as Sima Qian's criticism of the royal Han family, especially with regard to the annals of Emperors Wu and Jing.

[64] Chen Zhi, 'Han, Jin ren dui Shiji de chuanbo ji qi pingjia', 215.

[65] Ibid., 222. Chen has shown that the title *Shiji* began to be used for the text at least as early as AD 172.

[66] *Hanshu*, 62.2724.

[67] Lu Zongli, 'Problems concerning the Authenticity of Shih chi 123 Reconsidered', *Chinese Literature, Articles, Essays, Reviews*, 15 (1993), 51–68.

the 'three standard commentaries,' *san jia zhu*),[68] has at least three manuscript versions of the *Shiji*.[69]

Moreover, if ten chapters were lost from most editions, as has been assumed, it is likely that many scholars held partial manuscripts, and that some may even have had less truncated versions in their hands. Indeed, it is not impossible as the *Shiji* was orally transmitted,[70] with some scholars specializing in only some chapters or some subjects.[71] In the *Jinshu* [History of the Jin] (101.2645), Liu Yuan is said to have been able to recite a number of works from memory, but to have only 'read thoroughly' (*zong lan*) through the *Shiji*, *Hanshu* [History of the Han], and the writings of the hundred schools. In other words, he had studied and probably memorized only portions of the *Shiji* or *Hanshu*.[72] In the *Jinshu* (43.1232), when Zhang Hua is said to have excelled in explication the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, it can be assumed that this, too, refers to only selections from each history. Regardless of the means of transmission, however, by the time of Zhang Fu (*fl.* 300), the *Shiji* is referred to as a text 'in 500,000 characters'.[73]

The earliest copies of the *Shiji* are those partial manuscripts of a few chapters preserved in Japan and the portions of several chapters discovered in the Dunhuang caves, both dated to the Tang dynasty.[74] The other two standard commentaries (in addition to the *Shiji ji jie*) were also written in the Tang (early eighth century): Sima Zhen and Zhang Shoujie compiled the *Shiji zhengyi* and *Shiji suoyin* respectively. Sima Zhen focused on identifying allusions in the text

[68] On Xu Guang, see Scott W. Galer, 'Sounds and Meanings: Early Chinese Historical Exegesis and Xu Guang's *Shiji yinyi*', D.Phil. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 2003.

[69] As his note on *Shiji* 123.3164 reveals: 'To its (Dayuan's) southeast there is the state of Shendu [India]. For *shen* 身, some texts read *qian* 乾 and some also read *qi* 訖.' Although impossible to determine who produced these manuscripts, or from which of the two autographs they derive, Chen Zhi, 'Han, Jin ren dui Shiji de chuanbo ji qi pingjia,' 217, has shown that a citation of the *Shiji*'s 'Huozhi liezhuan' chapter in the *Yan tie lun* (Discourses on Salt and Iron, ascribed to Huan Kuan and dated *c.* 74–49 BC), differs considerably from the received edition of that chapter. Although many reasons could explain the differences between the citation and the 'Huozhi liezhuan' itself, Chen Zhi, 'Han, Jin ren dui Shiji de chuanbo ji qi pingjia', 219, suggests the possibility that our current version of the *Shiji* derives from the 'famous mountain' edition that Yang Yun released gradually about this time, whereas the *Yan tie lun* may have relied on the copy that was held in the imperial archives.

[70] On the oral transmission of the *Shiji*, see William H. Nienhauser, Jr., 'Introduction', in *The Grand Scribe's Records,* vol. 8: *The Memoirs of the Han Dynasty*, trans. and ed. Nienhauser (Bloomington, Ind., 2008).

[71] A process similar to that Jeffrey Riegel has suggested for the transmission of the *Shijing* in the early Han in his 'Eros, Introversion, and the Beginnings of *Shijing* Commentary', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 57 (1997), 145 n. 8.

[72] Possibly explaining why early manuscripts from the Tang or the Six Dynasties held in Japanese collections are all fragments of single chapters.

[73] *Jinshu*, 60.1639; the modern received text contains about 600,000 characters.

[74] On manuscripts held in Japan, see He Cijun, *Shiji shulu* (Shanghai, 1958). On the three *Shiji* fragments found at Dunhuang, see Zhang Yuchun, 'Dunhuang Mogao Ku cang Shiji Tang xieben kao', *Dunhuang yanjiu*, 68:2 (2001), 113.

and correcting some of Pei Yin's comments; Zhang Shoujie's notes are particularly focused on explaining early place names and locations.[75]

The first complete extant printed editions of the text were prepared during the Northern Song dynasty. Although some earlier versions of the three-commentaries texts contained only brief citations of the original *Shiji* text followed by relevant comments, it became common practice in the Song to include the three traditional commentaries with the entire original text. The most important Song editions include (1) that edited by Huang Shanfu and printed as part of the Baina (Hundred Patches) edition of the Twenty-four Histories (1190–1194), and (2) the Bei Song Jingyou (Guozi) Jian (College of the Northern Song Sons of State) edition (1034–1037).

Three other traditional editions are significant: (1) Ling Zhilong's (*fl.* 1576–1587) *Shiji pinglin* [Forest of Comments on the Records of the Scribe] published in 1576, (2) the *Shiji* edition published by the Wuying Dian (Imperial Printing Office) in 1739, and (3) the Jinling Shuju *Shiji* published in 1867. The *Shiji pinglin* is the only traditional edition to include substantial comments (in *meipi* or scholia added at the top of each page), primarily by Ming-dynasty scholars, in addition to those of the three traditional exegeses.

The Jinling Shuju edition was intended as the critical edition to replace all early texts. The project had been initiated in 1864 by Zeng Guofan to replace texts that had been lost in the Taiping Rebellion. The editor responsible for the new *Shiji*, Zhang Wenhu, based his text primarily on the Ming edition edited by Wang Yanzhe. Zhang's emendations were based in part on a number of other editions he actually examined, but he also took into account collation notes by Qian Taiji concerning editions not available to him.[76] Moreover, he often suggested a preferred reading based solely on Liang Yusheng's comments in the *Shiji zhiyi*.[77] Despite Zhang's extensive collation of texts, he did not have access to either the Baina edition or the Jingyou editions. Zhang's work has had a great impact on modern studies of the *Shiji* because it became the base text for the Zhonghua Shuju edition of the *Shiji* (10 vols., 1959), now the most commonly used edition.[78]

MEANING

If the famous phrase *yi jia zhi yan* refers to the 'interpretations of a single family', how were these interpretations conveyed in an historical treatise like the *Shiji*? The meaning of this text can be found in both its structure and its content.

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[75] Zhu Dongrun (1896–1988), *Shiji kaosuo* (Hong Kong, 1974), discusses a number of other Tang commentators. See also Nienhauser, *Grand Scribe's Records*, xiii. 420–5.

[76] Qian Taiji's student, Tang Renshou (1829–1876), was involved in the early stages of editing this version, and it is likely that Qian's collational notes were introduced to Zhang by Tang.

[77] On Zhang's methods and sources, see Nienhauser, *Grand Scribe's Records,* vol. 2: *The Basic Annals of Han China*, trans. and ed. Nienhauser (Bloomington, Ind., 2002), pp. xxxiii–xlvii.

[78] On the preparation of this edition, see William H. Nienhauser, Jr., 'Historians of China', *Chinese Literature, Articles, Essays,* Reviews, 17 (1995), 207–17.

With regard to structure, Sima Qian embodied meaning (1) in the historian's comments at the end of each chapter and his explanations for why each chapter was written (listed in the 'Postface'); (2) in the overall structure of the work, from the basic annals to the biographies, apparently intended to be read in order from chapter 1 to chapter 130; and (3) in the arrangement of the subsections within the five main sections. In terms of content, the Grand Scribe employed dialogue, leitmotifs, foils, and the antithesis of content—omission—in making clear his assessments.

Although it is possible that much of this work was done as the history progressed, some scholars have suggested that it was after he suffered castration that he wove his dissatisfaction with Emperor Wu and his policies into his portrayal of contemporary politics. In the 'Postface', Qian, when questioned by Hu Sui about his purpose in writing, denies that he was imbuing his text with the deeper meanings Confucius supposedly added to the *Chunqiu*. Yet in the passage that follows, it seems clear that this is precisely what he did:

At this time he (the Grand Scribe) was selecting and ordering his texts. After seven years, His Honour the Grand Scribe encountered the misfortune of the Li Ling (affair), and was imprisoned in bonds. Only then did let out a long sigh and say, 'Was this indeed all my fault?! Was this indeed all my fault?! My body is ruined and I cannot be employed (again).' After withdrawing and reflecting deeply, he said, 'Those who in the *Shi* (Classic of Poetry) and *Shu* (Venerated Documents) offered veiled criticism wanted after all to record their feelings. Long ago when the Hegemon of the West (King Wen) was restrained at Youli, he expanded on the *Zhou Yi* (another name for the *Yijing*, or Classic of Changes). When Confucius was in distress between Chen and Cai, he compiled the *Chunqiu*. When Qu Yuan had been driven into banishment, he wrote the 'Li sao.' Only when Zuo Qiu lost his sight, was there a *Guoyu*. When Sunzi had his lower legs cut off, he put in order the *Bingfa* (Art of War) (Lü) Buwei was sent away to Shu, but his *Lü lan* ('Surveys' in the Springs and Autumns of Mr Lü) has been handed down through the ages. When Han Fei was incarcerated in Qin, (he composed) the 'Shuo nan' and 'Gu fen' (chapters). (Along with) the three hundred poems in the *Shi*, most of these works are those which were composed when worthy men and sages released their angered dissatisfaction. These men all had something which brought indignation to their minds and they were unable to find their way. Therefore, they narrated past affairs hoping that those in the future (would understand them).[79]

The entire passage lends an irony to his disclaimer to have written a work with an implied layer of political meaning as Confucius did in the *Chunqiu*,[80] since the phrase 'let out a long sigh and say' alludes to the *Analects* (*Lunyu*, 11.16), where Confucius has asked three of his disciples what they would do if they

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[79] *Shiji*, 130.3300.
[80] On Sima Qian's relationship to Confucius and the resonances he created between himself and other earlier Chinese heroic figures, see Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror.*

encountered a ruler who 'understood their worth' (zhi). After two of the disciples replied in political terms, Zeng Zi answered that he would simply like to bathe in a river and enjoy the breeze. To this Confucius 'lets out a long sigh' and speaks his approval. Thus it seems Sima Qian, like Confucius, was disillusioned with politics after his imprisonment and physical punishment. He felt he was no longer employable (*bu yong*) and 'unable to carry through his intentions'. But he still could, like the sages of old, 'release his pent up dissatisfactions' (*fa fen*) in the hopes that 'those in the future would understand them'. The expression *fa fen* occurs one other time in the 'Postface', when Sima Qian is depicting his father's death: 'This year (110 BC) the Son of Heaven first set up the *feng* sacrifice, but the Honorable Grand Scribe had to stay behind at Zhou Nan (Luoyang) and was unable to go along with (the emperor) and attend the affair. Therefore, he released his pent-up dissatisfaction and then passed away.'[81] This dissatisfaction may refer to Emperor Wu's policies, to the emperor's treatment of Sima Tan, or perhaps to his unfinished historical project. In any case, Qian, through his misfortunes in dealing with Emperor Wu, was able to inherit the same 'dissatisfaction'.

It has already been noted that Sima Qian implied a certain structural meaning in his arrangement of the five subsections of the *Shiji*. The annals and tables were to provide the basic chronology into which the treatises, and especially the hereditary houses and biographies, could be situated. Within the last two of these five generic sections it is possible to detect smaller meaningful divisions. Thus it might be argued that chapters 30–42 provide a regional history of the first half of the Zhou dynasty; 43–47 depict the Warring States; 48 the rise of the rebels against Qin; 50–60 the Han princes and great ministers; 61–66 their counterparts in the early Zhou; 67–73 the gradual domination of Qin over the six other states; 74–84 the lords and their advisers to the end of the Warring States; 85–88 the rise and fall of Qin; 89–94 the disaffected generals of Han Gaozu;[82] 95–100 Gaozu's loyal followers; 101–104 eminent officials of the early Han emperors; 107–108 statesmen of Sima Qian's time; 109–112 the Xiongnu problem; 113–116 foreign neighbours; 117–122 cultural and political figures under Han Wudi; 124–129 various collective biographies; and 130 the 'Postface'.

Qian's intent can also be seen in his closing remarks at the end of each chapter, and in the listing of reasons for writing each chapter found in the 'Postface'. In his comments on the 'Basic Annals of Xiang Yu', for example, Qian stresses that Xiang Yu himself, nor Heaven as Xiang Yu had claimed, brought about Yu's failure. This theme, of the importance of the individual and his actions in shaping events, is echoed throughout the *Shiji*.[83] 'The Biography of Shu Qi and Bo Yi'

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[81] *Shiji*, 130.3295.

[82] Following Watson's *Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China* nomenclature for these subsections.

[83] See ibid., 8, on the importance Qian ascribed to man's influence on history.

(chapter 61), which serves as an introduction to the entire biographical section, stresses the importance of recording traditions of worthy men whose deeds have not been carefully transmitted. In the following chapter 62 ('Biographies of Guan Zhong and Yang Ying'), when Qian comments on the relationship between Guan and his ruler, Duke Huan of Qi, by citing an old saying, his words could also apply to his own dealings with Emperor Wu: 'One guides his ruler in according with the ruler's merits and rectifies him in order to redeem him from his excesses.' Explaining Wu Zixu's choice to stay alive rather than die in a futile attempt to rescue his father, Wu She, Qian justifies his own decision to accept castration rather than commit suicide as was expected of those with sentences similar to that of the Grand Scribe: 'If Wu Zi Xu had accompanied Wu She in death, how would he differ from an ant or mole-cricket? Casting aside a lesser duty, he wiped clean a great disgrace, and his name has endured through later generations' (from the historian's commentary on chapter 66).[84] This idea is echoed as a conclusion to the 'Biographies of Lian Po and Lin Xiangru' (chapter 81): 'As for dying, that is no difficult matter; it is using one's death to good purpose that is difficult.' Qian's unorthodox inclusion of biographies of assassin-retainers or knights errant (criticized by many, beginning with Ban Gu), is explained by noting that these men 'did not sell their goals short' and thus 'their names should be handed down to later generations' (comments on chapter 86). On the theme of how states rise and fall, the comments to two hereditary houses also speak to the politics of the Han dynasty in Sima Qian's day: the state of Qi because of Duke Huan's 'excellent government policies' claimed hegemony and 'had the style of a great state' (chapter 32); the small state of Chen came to an end because of its ruler's extravagant lifestyle and 'his not establishing virtue in his rule' (chapter 37).[85]

While Sima Qian never openly connects these precedents to contemporary times, he invites readers to do so. For example, Qian has Han Anguo utter his own assessment of the Emperor Wu's policy of aggressively attacking the Xiongnu nomads:

No profit comes to an army that has to fight one thousand miles from home. The Xiongnu move on the feet of swift war horses and in their breasts beat the hearts of beasts. They shift from place to place as fast as a flock of birds, so that it is extremely difficult to corner them and bring them under control. Though we were to win possession of their land, it would be no great addition to the empire, and though we ruled their hosts of warriors, they would do little to strengthen our power....If we now march thousands of miles away and try to fight with them, our men and horse will be worn out and then the wretches will muster all their strength and fall upon us.[86]

This opposition is repeated in several places in the chapters concerning the Xiongnu (109–112)—perhaps most persuasively in the memorials of Zhufu

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[84] See Durrant, 'Dying Fathers and Living Memories,' *The Cloudy Mirror*, 71–98.
[85] *Shiji*, 32.1513 and 35.1574.   [86] *Shiji*, 108.2861.

Yan (chapter 112). Yan, like Sima Qian himself, was careful to put his strongest critiques back into an earlier historical content (the Qin dynasty). After years of engaging the Xiongnu, Zhufu Yan writes, 'the Han armies were camped in worthless tracts of land, able to advance but never withdraw. The young men were obliged to don armour and the women to transport provisions; hardship made life no longer worth living and the people hung themselves from roadside trees in such numbers that one corpse dangled within sight of another.'[87]

In addition, leitmotifs or repeated tropes—such as (1) supporting and recommending worthy men, regardless of their social level (cf. chs. 62 and 86), often with a generosity of purse or spirit (such as willingness to forgive a wrong), (2) loyalty to friends, especially those who 'understand you' [*zhi ji*] (chapter 86), (3) paired lives, especially in the 'collective biographies' (*lei zhuan*), but also in accounts such as 'Qu Yuan and Jia Yi' (chapter 84), and (4) indirectly criticizing a person or event by denying them an account in the *Shiji*—all aided Qian in making clear his assessments. As noted above, eight of the twelve chancellors under Emperor Wu—men who failed to establish virtue in his rule—do not have biographies in the *Shiji*. Similarly, events that did not fit one of the overall concerns of the Grand Scribe were not recorded.[88]

Jean Levi has summarized Sima Qian's goals in writing the *Shiji* as (1) to explore the rise and fall of states, (2) to show his literary talent, (3) to give voice to unsung heroes, and (4) to justify his failure to do the honourable thing by committing suicide after his disgrace.[89] Although scholars throughout history have already pointed to these four goals and have discoursed at length on Qian's methods to achieve them, readers over the centuries have not always seen the larger picture. The marginalia in many early editions suggest that readers often dislodged the overall structure and meaning of the *Shiji* by focusing on a relatively small number of chapters—usually the same fifteen to twenty-five, all from the 'biography' section—and ignored all else.[90] This resulted in early 'anthologies' (*xuanben*), such as Lü Zuqian's edition in his *Shiqishi xiangjie* (c.1170, twenty *juan*), Yang Shen's *Yang Shengyan Xiansheng bixuan Shiji shiyan* (c.1550, in eight *juan*), or, perhaps the best known selection, Yao Zu'en's[91] *Shiji jinghua lu* (1824; six *juan*). Ling Zhilong, the editor of perhaps the largest *Shiji* edition (the *Shiji pinglin*), is also the compiler of one of these anthologies, the

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[87] *Shiji*, 112.2958.
[88] Cf. Sima Qian's remarks on Zhang Liang: 'Those times that the Marquis of Liu (Zhang Liang) in a relaxed manner spoke to matters of the empire were quite numerous, but as they did not concern the preservation or fall of the empire, I have not recorded them' (*Shiji*, 55.2047–8).
[89] Jean Levi, 'Les Mémoires historiques de Sima Qian ou l'histoire rattrapée par la roman', in id., *La Chine Romanesque* (Paris, 1995).
[90] As Western readers have read, and continued to read, the Bible.
[91] Yao Zu'en received his *jinshi* degree in 1784.

Shiji zuan. In his preface (3a–b) he notes that, when he travelled, the *Shiji* was too large to carry with him, and so he copied out by hand his favourite chapters. Then when a friend saw the manuscript, he found it such a good selection that he had it printed.

Chapters similar to those that these traditional scholars selected are still those read most often today in classrooms and homes throughout China. Wang Boxiang's *Shiji xuan* (1955), and the translation of these chapters by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang titled *Records of the Historian* (1974) are the best known examples. A recent phenomenon is the publication of selected chapters from the *Shiji* that profit from the popularity of television series that have highlighted certain of Sima Qian's characters.[92]

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

*c.*1500–1045 BC	Shang Dynasty
1045–771 BC	Western Zhou Dynasty
770–256 BC	Eastern Zhou Dynasty
770–481 BC	Spring and Autumn Era
480–221 BC	Warring States Era
221–206 BC	Qin Dynasty
202 BC–AD 8	Western Han Dynasty

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[92] It is possible that the earlier selections of the *Shije* published in pre-modern times were similarly influenced by storytelling or dramatic performances of certain characters or events.

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Chapter 20
The Han Histories

Stephen W. Durrant

A recent history of the early Chinese empires points to 'a fundamental reshaping of Chinese culture by the earliest dynasties, the Qin and Han'.[1] During the latter of these dynasties, the Han (202 BC–AD 220), historiography played a key part in this reshaping of culture. The first two of what would become a vast collection known as the 'standard histories' (*zheng shi*), the backbone of traditional Chinese historical study, took form during this dynasty. The earlier of these two, *Shiji* [Records of the Scribe], was a general history covering approximately 2,500 years extending from the time of the mythical Yellow Emperor down to the last years of Emperor Wu. In the vastness of its temporal sweep, *Shiji* stood alone among the standard histories. The second great Han historical text, Ban Gu's *Hanshu* [History of the Han], covered only the years from the rise of the Han at the end of the third century BC to the death of the 'usurper' Wang Mang, and became the prototype 'history that breaks off a single era' (*duandai shi*), or what we commonly call a 'dynastic history'. To understand fully the context of Ban Gu's historical research, we must step outside the *Hanshu* to consider a third standard history, Fan Ye's *Hou Hanshu* [History of the Later Han], which covers the period from the death of Wang Mang, when Ban Gu's record breaks off, up to the fall of the Han dynasty two centuries later. Fan Ye writes from a vantage point well into the Six Dynasties, when the period he covers in his text had receded far into the past. The period of political disunity that followed the Han witnessed a flood of historical writing in a wide variety of forms. One of the texts from this period, Chen Shou's *Sanguozhi* [Records of the Three Kingdoms], also came to be numbered among the standard histories. Such important developments will be treated somewhat cursorily herein because they take us beyond the Han, both in the period of time they cover and in the period of their composition. Fan Ye, by way of contrast, completes the standard account of the Han dynasty, which might fairly be regarded, not only as a period of unprecedented

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[1] Mark Edward Lewis, *The Chinese Empires: Qin and Han* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2007), 1.

reshaping of Chinese culture, but as the single most important era in the development of traditional Chinese historiography.

The history of the text of *Shiji* in the first decades after Sima Qian's death is at best sketchy, but what little we know tells us much about subsequent historiography. Ban Gu says that, after Sima Qian's death, *Shiji* 'gradually appeared', and that Sima Qian's grandson Yang Yun was its primary transmitter.[2] Some concern was expressed about the free circulation of this text. In approximately 32 BC, an imperial relative, who ruled over the small eastern kingdom of Dongping, came to court and requested copies both of philosophical texts and also of *Shiji*. The prominent Han general Wang Feng recommended to the new Emperor Cheng (r. 33–7 BC) that the request for Sima Qian's history be denied, for it 'contained the wily plots of Warring States' political rhetoricians'.[3] Such reservations notwithstanding, *Shiji* had a strong hold upon scholars throughout the last decades of the Western Han, the years of Wang Mang's reign, and the early decades of the Eastern Han. The noted Tang historiographer Liu Zhiji lists fifteen scholars who wrote continuations of Sima Qian's text, extending its coverage up into the years of emperors Ai (r. 7–1 BC) and Ping (1 BC–AD 6). Among his list of those who produced these addenda to *Shiji* are such famous figures as the father and son bibliographers and editors Liu Xiang and Liu Xin, and the philosopher and poet Yang Xiong.[4] All of these works have perished, and whether Liu Zhiji had personally seen them, or only knew of them indirectly, remains unclear. The distinguished Six Dynasties scholar and polymath Ge Hong did make the claim that one of these addenda, that of Liu Xin, was the source for much of *Hanshu*, but this claim is now difficult to evaluate.[5]

BAN BIAO'S CONTINUATION AND CRITIQUE OF *SHIJI*

The most noteworthy continuation of *Shiji* was by Ban Biao, the father of the great historian Ban Gu. The Bans, according to their own tradition, were descended from a noble family from the southern state of Chu. At the time Qin

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[2] *Hanshu* (hereafter, *HS*), 62.2737.   [3] *HS*, 80.3324–25.
[4] *Shitong*, 'Outer Chapters', 2.
[5] The *Baopuzi* says: 'Liu Xin wanted to write a Han history, making a record of events of the Han period. Before he had finished, he passed away. Consequently, there was no master version, but only some miscellaneous records. I have attempted to collate what Ban Gu wrote, and he has used almost all of Liu's text. That which Ban Gu did not use amounts to only somewhat over twenty thousand words.' Most scholars have discounted this account, denying that Ban Gu incorporated large amounts of what Liu Xin had written earlier. However, Qian Mu accepts the claim, noting that what scholars have sometimes rejected is another reading of the passage above, which would be that 'I have tried to make a collation, and almost all of what Ban Gu wrote was taken from Liu's text.' Such a reading makes Ge Hong's claim almost absurd, but the other interpretation, which is that Ban Gu incorporated most of Liu's miscellaneous records, is plausible. Qian Mu, *Zhongguo shixue mingzhu* (1973; repr., Taibei, 2001), 89.

annihilated Chu in 223 BC, the family was relocated to the northern frontier, where they apparently gained considerable wealth and status. Ban Biao's grandfather, Ban Kuang, was recommended to the Han government as someone 'filial and incorruptible', and was given a post at the capital. Family fortunes were further enhanced when Ban Kuang's daughter, Ban Jieyu, was selected to become one of Emperor Cheng's palace ladies and eventually rose to the position of 'most favoured concubine'. The Bans, now a consort family, were to benefit from their close association with the reigning Liu family. Ban Bo, one of Jieyu's brothers and Ban Biao's uncle, was brought to the palace to study alongside the young emperor and was admired both for his classical scholarship and his good looks. Bo's younger brother Yu, apparently a gifted scholar in his own right, was appointed to assist Liu Xiang in collating books in the imperial archives. Yu's work so pleased the Emperor that he was given copies of texts from the archives—gifts that made the private Ban family library a magnet for scholars at that time.[6]

What somewhat complicates the Ban family history, and may help us understand certain features of the Han history they eventually produced, was their experience during Wang Mang's rise to power and the years of his short-lived Xin dynasty (AD 9–23). In their youth, both Ban Yu and Ban Xi (Ban Biao's father) were close associates of Wang Mang who, like them, was an imperial in-law. But Ban Xi's refusal to help fabricate prognostications in support of Wang Mang brought a decline of the family's status, something that may actually have saved them from further association with the 'usurper'. During the political jockeying at the end of the Wang Mang years, Ban Biao first attached himself to Wei Ao (d. AD 33), and then to Dou Rong. Through it all, his son assures us, Biao remained loyal to the Han, an assurance very much in the interest of the family's later reputation. When Wei Ao asked him if the empire was going to dissolve into states, with a 'hegemon' assuming control, Biao produced an essay entitled 'On the Destiny of Kings', which supported the Liu family and the Han restoration. Later, Biao persuaded Dou Rong to join forces with Liu Xiu, who was to restore the Han and reign as Emperor Guangwu (r. 25–57). These events are important because they emphasize the Ban family's support of Liu family rule, which would also be reflected in Ban Gu's historical writing, and because Ban Biao's relationship with Dou Rong was to perpetuate a Dou–Ban connection that would eventually undermine the Liu–Ban relationship and lead to Ban Gu's tragic death.

Despite his support of the Liu restoration, Ban Biao received nothing more than a sinecure in the new government. This may have provided him with the

[6] For more details on the fascinating history of the Ban family, see Anthony E. Clark, *Ban Gu's History of Early China* (Amherst, NY, 2008), 61–91; Michael Loewe, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han and Xin Periods, 221 BC–AD 24* (Leiden/Boston, 2000), 4–6; Otto B. van der Sprenkel, *Pan Piao, Pan Ku, and the Han History* (Canberra, 1964); and Chen Qitai and Zhao Yongchun, *Ban Gu pingzuan* (Nanjing, 2002). We must keep in mind, however, that the major source for this history is Ban Gu himself in *HS* 100.

leisure to turn to historical writing and join what had become almost a cottage industry of producing continuations to *Shiji.* Curiously, Ban Gu says nothing about his father's earlier historical research, and later scholars have thereby charged Ban Gu with the unfilial act of 'erasing his father'.[7] Fan Ye's much later biography of Ban Biao claims the latter had been concerned that none of the previous attempts to continue *Shiji* had been adequate, and so he 'selected matters that previous historians had passed down, supplementing this with variant accounts and wrote "Later Biographies" in several tens of chapters'.[8] Fan Ye goes on to quote Ban Biao's general explanation of his text in which Biao also evaluates the work of Sima Qian, whose work he is continuing. These comments tell us much about opinions regarding Sima Qian in the first decades of the later Han, and will be echoed later in Ban Gu's own evaluation of Sima Qian. While Biao credits Sima Qian with being skilled at narrating and 'bringing order to events', as well as with the great breadth of his coverage, he criticizes *Shiji* on three grounds: style, format, and ideology.

Sima Qian's style is judged as so repetitive that it could be edited endlessly, and his conventions for registering people's names and place of birth at the beginning of their biographies are criticized as insufficiently uniform. Ban Biao describes the overall format of *Shiji* with approval, but then he notes that the accounts of such figures as Xiang Yu, Chen She, Huainan, and Hengshan are misplaced. While he is not more explicit than this, we might conclude that he believes Xiang Yu, who was the premier political power in China for a few years between the fall of the Qin and the proclamation of the Han, should be in the 'Hereditary Households' or 'Biographies' section of the *Shiji*, rather than in the 'Basic Annals'; that Chen She, who initiated the attacks upon the Qin, should be among the 'Biographies' rather than among the 'Hereditary Households'; and that both Huainan and Hengshan, as members of a royal family, should be among the 'Hereditary Households', rather than among the 'Biographies'. But it is Ban Biao's ideological concerns about Sima Qian's writings that provoke his most damning criticisms: 'he esteems Huang-Lao thought and slights the Five Classics'. Two chapters of *Shiji* are singled out for particular criticism: Sima Qian's chapter on money-makers (chapter 129) 'slights goodness and justice and attaches shame to poverty', and his chapter on wandering knights (chapter 124) 'discounts those who hold to principle and honours those of common accomplishment'. It is significant that Ban Biao thinks Sima Qian's greatest accomplishment to be his history of the first decades of the Han, but he goes on to note that 'he is negligent in a large number of cases and is not as good as his sources', one of these sources for the early Han being Lu Jia's now lost *Chu*

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[7] Qian Mu, *Zhongguo shixue mingzhu*, 91. In this regard, Ban Gu is sometimes put in contrast to Sima Qian, who acknowledges his father's efforts and says that his own work resulted from his father's command.

[8] *Hou Hanshu* (hereafter, *HHS*), 40.1324–25.

Han chunqiu [Spring and Autumn Annals of Chu and Han]. Ban Biao's criticisms are important, argues one recent scholar, because they mark a first major step toward the development of a critical historiography. With Ban Biao's comments, the category of history begins to separate from the category of 'classics', a separation that will come to be reflected in subsequent bibliographic literature.[9] Ban Biao's insistence upon ideological purity should not surprise us, since he wrote at a time when Confucian norms were more deeply entrenched than they were two centuries earlier, but his concern with the correct categorization of historical figures from the past might leave the modern reader baffled. Yet this will continue to be an important topic in Chinese historiography, as Liu Zhiji's later obsession with the proper categorization of historical figures fully demonstrates.[10] Such concern must be seen as a part of a more general Chinese passion for proper classification that might be loosely linked to Confucian emphasis upon 'rectification of names' (*zheng ming*). Moreover, correct organization of the figures of the past can impinge upon the critical political issue of the rightful succession of rulers. This was surely on Ban Biao's mind as he advocated expelling Xiang Yu from the annals, thus assuring an immediate succession from Qin to Han.

Ban Biao has much less to say about his own project than he has to say about Sima Qian. He simply notes that his work includes only 'Annals' and 'Biographies', and will not include a 'Hereditary Household' section. Presumably the latter would imply that the Han, like the Warring States Period, had not been unified. Biao's essay, and his own historical work, reveals just how long the shadow of *Shiji* throws across later Han historiography. Sima Qian becomes the father that so many later historians simultaneously admire and resent.[11] This will be particularly true of Ban Gu, who simultaneously shares his father's tough judgement of Sima Qian and copies huge sections of *Shiji* into his own history.

Several questions might be asked about Ban Biao's work, even as we admit that, in the absence of the actual text, our answers can only be tentative. First, what was the size and scope of his history? Fan Ye, as we have seen, says Ban Biao wrote 'several tens' of chapters; others say sixty-five or even 'more than one hundred'.[12] The title would imply that these were 'biographies' of important Han figures, but his own description of the text leaves open the possibility that he also completed 'annals' for emperors subsequent to Emperor Wu. Second, what source materials did he draw upon? Everything we know about *Shiji* and

[9] Lu Yaodong, *Wei Jin shixue ji qita* (Taibei, 1998), 79. In the *Hanshu* bibliographic essay, history (*shi*) is subsumed under classics (*jing*), but in the *Suishu* it is an independent category.
[10] Considerations of proper classification run throughout *Shitong*. For a striking example, see 'Inner Chapters', ch. 4 on the 'Basic Annals', wherein Liu mulls over what should and should not be included in this section of standard histories.
[11] Whatever one thinks of Harold Bloom's 'anxiety of influence' as a general model of literary history, it does indeed seem applicable here.
[12] Chen and Zhao, *Ban Gu pingzhuan*, 62.

the *Hanshu* leads to the conclusion that wholesale incorporation of earlier work without acknowledging sources was the accepted historiographic method. Thus, we must suppose that Ban Biao used whatever archival material he may have been able to access, and that he also may have incorporated the earlier work of esteemed scholars such as Liu Xin and Yang Xiong. Third, how much of Ban Biao's work was included in the work of his son Ban Gu? Scholars have identified five chapters of *Hanshu* with clear indications that they derive from Ban Biao's earlier text.[13] Given the presumed scope of Ban Biao's efforts, it would not be surprising if his contribution to *Hanshu* goes well beyond this. Just as Sima Qian never tells us where his father's work stops and his own begins, whatever Ban Gu has used of his father's work is passed over in total silence.

BAN GU AND THE GENESIS OF A HAN HISTORY

Ban Gu's efforts as an historian, at least from what he himself says, began most inauspiciously. He was born in 32 AD and was, by all accounts, a precocious youth: 'At the age of nine Ban Gu could write prose and could recite poetry and rhapsodies. When he had grown up he had a broad and penetrating grasp of texts. There were none of the words of the Nine Currents and Hundred Schools he had not thoroughly studied.'[14] There is some indication that he studied at the Grand Academy and became friends with one of his father's students, the great philosopher Wang Chong. When his father died in AD 54, Gu returned to his native village to mourn, as would have been expected of a filial son. Presumably it was first during the obligatory period of mourning that 'Gu considered his father's continuation of previous history incomplete and then concentrated all his energy upon research, desiring to complete his father's work.' His work did not go unnoticed. Several years later, someone wrote a letter to Emperor Ming reporting that Ban Gu was 'secretly revising state history'. He was consequently seized and imprisoned. The crime is a curious one. As we have seen above, historical writings could be treated as politically sensitive documents, but we have also noted that numerous scholars, including Ban Biao himself, had written continuations of Sima Qian's *Shiji* with apparent impunity. The concern about Ban Gu's writings, I believe, centres not so much upon the creation of random biographies as a continuation of that particular section of Sima Qian's work, but upon the lineage of rulers. If Ban Gu was engaged in writing annals of Han rulers, whether he was revising what Sima Qian had written, or writing accounts of later rulers not included in *Shiji*, it could have prompted his arrest. There is another possibility. So far, Han scholars had done little more than continue

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[13] Loewe, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin*, 4.   [14] *HHS*, 40A.1330.

Sima Qian's efforts, bowing before the authority of the earlier historian. Perhaps, even at this early time, Ban Gu had a new plan: to produce a different kind of history—one that would rival his predecessor.

Ban Gu's imprisonment was to prove pivotal in his work as an historian. It also reveals how historiography had transformed since Sima Qian's time. In response to Ban Gu's arrest, his brother Ban Chao sent a letter to Emperor Ming (r. 57–75) and then met with the emperor to explain the intention behind his brother's writing. At the same time, the magistrate of the Ban's home district, probably as a part of the investigation, sent copies of Ban Gu's work to the emperor, who subsequently 'marvelled at it'. Not only was Ban Gu released from prison; he was appointed 'Scribe of the Orchid Terrace'—an archive located in the palace complex at Loyang—and was assigned to work with several other scholars to complete a basic annals of the emperor Guangwu, the first emperor after the restoration of the Han and the father of the reigning emperor Ming. Ban Gu was subsequently promoted to a 'gentleman of service', with the assignment to collate texts in the imperial library. The result of these efforts was not only annals of Guangwu, but also twenty-eight biographies of meritorious officials from Guangwu's reign. These writings are outside the temporal scope of Ban Gu's *Hanshu*, which ends with Wang Mang, but they were incorporated into another text, the *Dongguan Hanji* [Han Records of the Eastern Lodge], which later became the primary source of Fan Ye's *Hou Hanshu*.

As a result of Ban Gu's successful service in these endeavours, 'the emperor further ordered that he bring to a conclusion the historical documents he had been writing earlier'.[15] At this juncture, Ban Gu's work on *Hanshu* became an official government project—something the work of the two Simas before him had never been. The degree to which official status constrained what Ban Gu produced is difficult to know. *Hanshu* is in some ways a work of pro-Han propaganda (see below), but this may result as much from Ban Gu's own loyalist inclinations as from governmental coercion. Fan Ye states that Ban Gu worked assiduously on this project for over twenty years, finishing his work 'in the middle of the *jianchu* period' (76–83) of the reign of the new emperor Zhang (r. 75–88).[16] Much of the remainder of Ban Gu's life was taken up with other endeavours, such as writing an account of the disputes on the issue of the inconsistencies in classical texts that took place in the White Tiger Hall, and participating in political and military activities concerning the Xiongnu tribes, on which he seems to have been considered something of an expert. Unfortunately, Ban Gu's attachment to the military commander Dou Xian ensnared him in a longstanding dispute between the reigning Liu and Dou families that led to his second imprisonment and death in AD 92. Portions of *Hanshu* remained incomplete at the time of Ban Gu's death, and his remarkable sister Ban Zhao brought

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[15] Ibid., 40A.1334.   [16] Ibid.

the chronological tables to completion, while the noted scholar Ma Xu completed the monograph on astronomy. Thus, if one considers the likelihood that Ban Gu incorporated some of his father's material into his history, we can say that *Hanshu*, as it stands today, is very much a family project.

THE MAJOR FEATURES OF BAN GU'S HISTORY

There are four critical qualities of *Hanshu*. First, and perhaps most importantly, it is a history of a single dynastic period. It begins with the first Han emperor, Gaozu, and ends with Wang Mang. Some consequently label it 'the first dynastic history'. This is both correct and incorrect. It is correct in that *Hanshu* does not extend beyond a single dynasty, as noted above. Inclusion of Wang Mang within the parameters of the text marks this problematic historical figure, not as the founder of a new dynasty, but as a usurper. Indeed, the 'Annals', which trace the legitimate succession, end with Emperor Ping, Wang Mang being relegated to the 'Biographies' section of the text. However, *Hanshu* differs from most later dynastic histories in that it was written *before* the reigning dynasty had concluded. Ban Gu's history does mark the Western Han as a meaningful historical unit, but he believed that the Liu restoration was a legitimate continuation of that earlier period, and may even have considered the Liu family mandate to be eternal.[17] In a real sense, then, Fan Ye's *Hou Hanshu* completes the dynastic history of which Ban Gu's work is only the first half. The historiographer Liu Zhiji captures the significance of Ban Gu's contribution when he labels the new form 'a history which breaks off an era'.[18] The critical point implied by this term is not so much when Ban Gu ends as when he begins—that is, he breaks off the founding of the Han from the flow of history that preceded it.

Second, Ban Gu's most significant contribution is his account of the period extending from the initiation of the *taichu* calendar in 104 BC to the end of the Wang Mang period in AD 23. He clearly considered the proclamation of the new calendar to constitute the conclusion of *Shiji*: 'The taichu years on down are omitted and not recorded. Therefore I searched out and compiled what had been recorded previously and continued on to collect what is known in order to transmit *Hanshu,* beginning with Gaozu and ending with Emperor Ping and the death of Wang Mang, a total of twelve generations and two hundred and thirty years.'[19] Thus, we might divide *Hanshu* into two parts: approximately one hundred years that overlap with *Shiji* and rely very heavily upon that earlier text, and one hundred and thirty years of 'new history'. This is not to say that those

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[17] At least this is the argument in Clark, *Gu's History of Early China*, 171–88.

[18] Liu Zhiji puts the *Hanshu* at the head of one of his 'Six Schools' of historiography, noting that it 'exhausts the rise and fall of the Liu family, embraces a single era, and compiles this in a single historical document' (*Shitong*, 'Inner Chapters', ch. 1).

[19] *HS*, 100.4223.

sections overlapping with *Shiji* add nothing new. Likewise, we cannot conclude that anything after the proclamation of the *taichu* calendar is necessarily more original than what precedes it. As noted above, some of this latter part of Ban Gu's history may have been copied, or at least adapted from earlier sources, including his father's work. Originality was not considered a high value in early Chinese historical writing. Sima Qian, like Confucius before him, described himself as someone who 'transmits and does not create'. Ban Gu could perhaps have said as much about himself.

Third, the overall organization of *Hanshu* reflects Ban Gu's attachment to Sima Qian's earlier work as well as his attempt to break with and 'clean up' his predecessor. Ban Gu divides his book into four sections: 'Annals' (*ji*), 'Tables' (*biao*), 'Monographs' (*zhi*), and 'Traditions' (*zhuan*). This follows *Shiji*, except that the 'Hereditary Household' (*shijia*) section has been deleted and the names of the three other sections have been altered. Since the 'Hereditary Household' section was created primarily as a means of organizing the history of a time of political disunity, when sovereignty belonged to individual states as much as the central government, it was not deemed necessary for a time of dynastic unification such as the Han. Furthermore, the *Shiji* title 'Historical Record' (*shu*), sometimes translated 'Essay' or 'Treatise', has been replaced by the term 'Monograph' (*zhi*), thus vacating the word 'historical record' for use in the overall title of Ban Gu's history. Ban Gu also deletes the superfluous 'basic' (*ben*) and 'arrayed' (*lie*) from the titles of the first and fourth section of his text,[20] a move very much in accord with his tendency to abbreviate and 'clean up' Sima Qian's language. But what is remarkable is that the number of 'Annals' chapters and 'Traditions' chapters in *Hanshu*, twelve and seventy respectively, is the exact same number of chapters as in each of these sections in *Shiji*. Moreover, the total number of chapters devoted to 'Tables' and 'Monographs', eighteen, is also the same number as in *Shiji*, with the difference that *Hanshu* has eight 'Tables' and ten 'Monographs', whereas its predecessor has ten 'Tables' and eight 'Monographs'.

The reason for constructing the backbone of each history around twelve 'Annals', albeit quite differently configured in each case, is clear: they are both following the precedent of the *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals], purportedly written by the master Confucius himself, and organized around twelve dukes from the Eastern Zhou state of Lu. The reason Ban Gu adhered so closely to other chapter groupings of *Shiji* is unclear, but it does seem to be yet one more indication of the prestige *Shiji* had acquired. Nevertheless, when we turn to the precise configuration of each of Ban Gu's sections, we see important ways he has altered the Simas' organization. For example, in the case of those 'Annals' that overlap in the two texts, Ban Gu has included an 'Annals of Emperor Hui',

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[20] On these minor changes, see Pu Zaiyu, *Shiji Hanshu bijiao yanjiu* (Beijing, 1994), 168–180.

whereas in *Shiji* this particular emperor, who was never more than a pawn of his mother, the Empress Lü, is incorporated into her 'Basic Annals' chapter. And, of course, Xiang Yu, whose time of maximum political power preceded the Han dynasty anyway, is relegated to the 'Traditions' chapters in *Hanshu*, rather than occupying a 'Basic Annals' chapter as he does in *Shiji*. Ban Gu's intent in such choices is obvious: he would like to emphasize the clarity and legitimacy of the imperial succession. It should also be noted that Ban Gu adds three 'Monographs' of great significance: one on law (chapter 23), one on administrative geography (chapter 28), and one a bibliographic monograph (chapter 30). The third of these, an abridgement of the earlier but now lost work of Liu Xiang and his son Liu Xin, lists 596 texts found in the imperial library, and remains a foundation for bibliographic work on ancient China to the present day.

Fourth, *Shiji* covers approximately 2,500 years of history in just over 500,000 written Chinese characters, whereas *Hanshu* takes more than 800,000 written characters for 230 years. One of the main reasons for the much greater size of *Hanshu* is that it includes many more official documents and literary texts than *Shiji*. It thus becomes not only a history of the Han period, but also an anthology of important Han writings. For example, *Hanshu*, in contrast to *Shiji*, includes the valuable responses to imperial edicts of such important figures as Dong Zhongshu and Gongsun Hong.[21] The respective accounts of the young political and literary genius Jia Yi provide another example. While both histories contain two of his prose poems, *Hanshu* alone includes summaries of edicts Jia Yi presented on a number of critical political issues. The majority of the raw documents found in *Shiji* come from the Han period. *Hanshu* not only contains more of these for the period covered by both texts but, since it has an additional 130 years of Han history, the number of such documents proliferates. One is tempted to apply Arnaldo Momigliano's categories and regard *Hanshu* as a work of 'antiquarianism' as much as a work of ancient history.[22] What does seem certain is that Ban Gu uses *Hanshu* as much to preserve key historical documents from the former Han as to present his own historical account.

TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN *HANSHU*

The relationship between *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, noted above, must be discussed in greater detail precisely because it has played such an important role in general conceptions of these two texts. In a famous but somewhat intemperate attack, the Song scholar Zheng Qiao says that Ban Gu's history of the period from the

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[21] Cf. *Shiji* (hereafter referred to as *SJ*), 121.3127–3129 and *HS*, 56.2495–2526; *SJ*, 112.2949–2953 and *HS*, 58.2613–2624.

[22] See Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Ancient History and the Antiquarian', in id., *Studies in Historiography* (New York and Evanston, 1966), 1–39.

foundation of the Han to the time of Emperor Wu was 'completely pilfered from (Sima) Qian's text'.[23] William G. Crowell has recently correctly noted of *Shiji* and *Hanshu* that 'Too often the latter is regarded as a pale reflection of the former.'[24] Advocates of this prejudice should keep in mind that no less a scholar than the great Han philosopher Wang Chong criticized Sima Qian for 'relying on completing a record of what had preceded and having no creativity from within himself', essentially levelling at Sima Qian the same criticism Zheng Qiao levels at Ban Gu.[25] As has been amply demonstrated, huge amounts of *Shiji* derive directly from earlier works, such as *Zhanguoce* [Stratagems of the Warring States] and the *Zuozhuan* [Zuo Tradition].[26] What Hans Bielenstein has said of the later historian Fan Ye applies to a significant degree to both Ban Gu *and* Sima Qian: 'His own contributions as historian are mainly the way in which he selected from his predecessors and how he rearranged their material. Thus, neither he nor any of his predecessors can take the whole credit or blame for the present work. The responsibility is shared by all.'[27]

The critical issue when comparing *Hanshu*, or for that matter *Shiji*, with earlier sources is not to blame one or the other for wholesale copying of earlier works, but to take note of the type of adaptations and changes that have been introduced. The author of the most thorough comparison of *Shiji* and *Hanshu* says the following of Ban Gu: 'He did not simply copy the original but relied upon a rather complex set of principles and methods to make a painstaking adjustment and a revised supplement.'[28] We have already noted some of these adjustments on the level of overall organization: changing Sima Qian's five-section organization into a four-section organization, making changes in the organization of 'Annals', and adding several 'Monographs'. There are many other adjustments or additions in the specific content of each section. For example, Ban Gu creates new types of tables, one of which judges all important persons from the Yellow Emperor on down to such figures as Xiang Yu and Chen She, who live just before the founding of the Han, according to a grid of nine levels extending from the top category of 'sagely men', down to the bottom category of 'stupid men'.[29]

Below this 'macro-level', what can we say about Ban Gu's changes or adaptations in those sixty-one of one hundred chapters that rely to some extent upon

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[23] *Tongzhi*, 'Introduction'.

[24] 'Looking Through the Glass: Review of On-cho Ng and Q. Edward Wang, *Mirroring the Past: The Writing and Use of History in Imperial China*', *Early Medieval China*, 12 (2006), 194.

[25] *Lunheng*, 'Chaoqi'.

[26] See Stephen Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror: Tension and Conflict in the Writings of Sima Qian* (Albany, 1995), 71–122.

[27] Hans Bielenstien, 'The Restoration of the Han Dynasty', *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 26 (1954), 20–1.

[28] Pu, *Shiji Hanshu bijiao yanjiu*, 384.

[29] *HS*, 20. Despite the fact that *Hanshu* is generally a 'history of a single era', this particular table makes the safe decision to include only those persons who *precede* the Han era!

Shiji? The pattern of textual adaptation is a complicated one and badly needs further study. On the level of language alone, the difference between the two texts is striking. Briefly stated, the language of *Hanshu* tends toward greater compactness and formality, making use more regularly of such features as parallelism. Quoted language in Ban Gu's text is often much less colloquial. For such reasons, some scholars have judged the *Shiji* to be lively and the *Hanshu* to be wooden. On the other side, some consider the latter more crafted—the product of a more refined author. Early judgements of *Hanshu*, although usually more positive than those of *Shiji*, at least up until the Tang period, differed almost from the beginning. Wang Chong claimed that Ban Gu wrote very much like his father Ban Biao, whose 'meaning was obvious and principles complete'. Readers, Wang goes on say, considered Ban Biao's writing, which his son emulated, superior to that of Sima Qian.[30] But the Han emperor Xian (r. 189–220) thought *Hanshu* verbose and difficult, and ordered the scholar Xun Yue to produce an epitome, on the basis of the straightforward chronological style of the *Zuozhuan* (Xun Yue's history was the *Hanji* [Record of the Han]).[31] A somewhat tangled judgement of these two texts, but one that hits the majority of the most important language features of each, comes from the Ming scholar Hu Yinglin: 'Although we can regard Sima Qian's writing as more redundant than Ban Gu's, he is superior to Ban Gu because of his free and galloping style. Ban Gu meant to trim off redundancies so that his wording is less superfluous and branched. Although we can regard his writing as terser than Sima Qian, his style is inferior to Sima Qian precisely because he does trim away redundancies.'[32] Thus, Hu Yinglin regards Ban Gu's less redundant, terser language as inferior to the fuller, livelier style of Sima Qian. But this remains very much an issue of taste. Ban Gu's language does possess a stateliness and orderliness that is very impressive. He is, to be sure, a great writer, as his numerous prose-poems (*fu*) fully demonstrate.

In his conclusion to his biography of Sima Qian, Ban Gu excoriates his forerunner for a number of ideological flaws—some of them repetitions of his father Ban Biao's criticisms noted above. He says,

His evaluations stray rather often from the Sage (Confucius). In discussing fundamental moral law, he puts Huang-Lao in first place and puts the Six Classics last. In giving order to wandering knights, he disparages scholars living in retirement and advances the cause

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[30] *Lunheng*, 'Chaoqi'.   [31] *HHS*, 62.2062.

[32] Translation with small adaptations from Zongli Lu, 'Problems Concerning the Authenticity of *Shih chi* 123 Reconsidered', *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews*, 15 (1993), 67. It is this greater terseness of Ban Gu's language, along with other features, that misled Hulsewé into arguing that some of the *Shiji* has been 'back copied' from *Hanshu*. See A. F. P. Hulsewé, 'The Problem of the Authenticity of *Shih-chi* ch. 123, the Memoir on Ta Yüan', *T'oung Pao*, 61:1–3 (1975), 83–147. For a convincing rebuttal of Hulsewé see Zongli Lu, 'Problems Concerning the Authenticity of *Shih chi* 123 Reconsidered', 51–68.

of the recklessly heroic. In narrating the money-makers, he honours those whose situation is such that they make a profit and finds shame in the lowly and poor. These are his weaknesses.[33]

This passage forces one to ask to what extent, and in what way, Ban Gu has rectified what both he and his father considered to be his predecessor's flaws. Sima Qian, in fact, did honour the classical tradition and even claimed that one 'measures reliability according to the six classical arts',[34] but scholars have long noted the Daoist and Huang-Lao sympathies of parts of *Shiji*, with some arguing that such features derive from the hand of his Daoist-inclined father, Sima Tan. Ban Gu, reflecting the philosophical trends of his own time, states that his history 'consolidates its historical events, threading them together alongside the five classics, and bringing superior and inferior into harmonious concord'.[35]

By Ban Gu's time, the classical tradition had become something of an orthodoxy, and he claims to use this tradition as a touchstone for his history. One can see this change most clearly in his treatment of the Confucian tradition. The scholar Dong Zhongshu, a close contemporary of Sima Tan, occupies a relatively minor place in *Shiji* as one of a large number of figures included in a general chapter on classical learning. Dong's profound scholarship is acknowledged, but he also is portrayed as an eccentric whose ideas were declared 'stupid' even by one of his students. Ban Gu, in contrast to Sima Qian, devotes a whole chapter to Dong and includes a lengthy series of responses he supposedly wrote to Emperor Wu's queries. It is here where Dong makes his recommendation that 'all not within the field of the Six Arts, or the teachings of Confucius, should be cut short and not allowed to progress further'.[36] Ban Gu may well have agreed with Dong's exclusive commitment to the classical tradition, for in the 'eulogy' that concludes his account he quotes both Liu Xiang's statement that Dong had no superior as an adviser to kings, and also Liu Xin's opinion that Dong was 'the leader of all the classicists'.[37] Further proof of Ban Gu's esteem for the classics is reflected in the numerous times he formulates decisions and judgements on the basis of the interpretation of classics, or by reference to Confucius himself.[38] Moreover, whereas Sima Qian was at best ambivalent about official oversight of learning and the economic advantages some reaped from this, Ban Gu 'lauded the Han emperors for their sponsorship of textual learning, for he believed that such sponsorship maximized the chances that the grand classical traditions would be preserved'.[39]

Ban Gu's criticism of Sima Qian's esteem for wandering knights and ambivalence toward 'scholars living in retirement' targets *Shiji*, chapter 124. While

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[33] *HS*, 62.2737.   [34] *SJ*, 61.2121.   [35] *HS*, 100.4325.   [36] Ibid., 56.2523.

[37] Ibid., 56.2526.

[38] For examples, see Zhao Yi, *Ershier shi zhaji* (1799; repr., Beijing, 1984), 26.

[39] Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Michael Nylan, 'Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions Through Exemplary Figures in Early China', *T'oung Pao*, 89 (2003), 87.

much of the biographical information found in that chapter is reproduced almost verbatim in Ban Gu's own account of wandering knights, the preface to the biographies is entirely rewritten. Whereas the earlier Han historian commends the sincerity of wandering knights, the efficiency of their action, and their faithfulness to promises,[40] Ban Gu emphasizes the importance of the political order which these swashbuckling heroes can disrupt: 'All officers and those in authority esteem law and receive orders and thereby cultivate their duties. To neglect duty has punishment; to usurp an office has penalty. And for this reason, superior and inferior are in harmony with one another and all official affairs find good order.'[41]

Ban Gu takes a similar approach to the issue of those who strive to increase wealth. Sima Qian begins his biography of money-makers, chapter 129, by disparaging Laozi's notions of a primitive economy, and by advocating an order in which the government stands aside while people pursue wealth. He even claims that, in a competitive system, wealth flows to the capable.[42] Ban Gu's chapter on money-makers is considerably shorter than Sima Qian's, and he entirely rewrites the prefatory words to emphasize the importance of a structured society in which 'each group has its different rank, the small do not usurp the role of the great, and the lowly do not manage to overstep the noble.' This, again, will lead to a society in which 'superior and inferior are in order and the peoples' ambitions are stable.'[43] What Ban Gu seems to be countering, as Mark Edward Lewis has noted, is a tendency toward a regionalism based upon amassing private wealth and personal military power.[44]

BAN GU'S SEARCH FOR STABILITY IN THE WAKE OF WANG MANG

What we see in all of these cases is a relatively greater emphasis in Ban Gu's work upon stability, order, and imperial control. There are various reasons one might give for this. *Hanshu* was, after all, the first officially sponsored dynastic history, and one should expect to see some influence of its sponsor. Furthermore, Ban Gu lived in the aftermath of the precipitous decline of the Han and Wang Mang's brief but traumatic usurpation—an event that had challenged the mandate of the ruling Liu family and made them eager to assert legitimacy. Finally, Ban Gu, much more than his predecessor Sima Qian, was from a privileged family with close imperial connections. Whether or not we accept the Ban tradition that they descended from a powerful Chu-state lineage, once the family became relatives by marriage to the ruling house they were in a position of privilege and

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[40] *SJ*, 124.3181.   [41] *HS*, 92.3697.   [42] *SJ*, 129.3253, 3282.   [43] *HS*, 61.3679.
[44] Lewis, *The Chinese Empires*, 121. See also Mark Edward Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany, 2006), 222–3.

influence. With such political issues in mind, let us turn to the critical question of the overall purpose of *Hanshu*, and ponder how that purpose might have determined both its strengths and its limitations.

The penultimate and longest chapter of *Hanshu* is a biography devoted to Wang Mang. Since the 'Annals' section ends with the death of Emperor Ping in AD 6, Wang Mang's proclamation of the New Dynasty and subsequent fourteen-year reign is discounted by its very exclusion from the 'Annals' section. One of the reasons Ban Gu relegates Xiang Yu to the 'Biographies' section rather than following Sima Qian and placing him among the 'Annals' is to bracket the legitimate Liu family, rulers of the Han, with two pretenders—neither of them a rightful possessor of the throne. Moreover, Ban Gu's biography of Wang Mang is such an unrelenting attack as to make later objective study of this figure almost impossible: 'As the duty of the historian lay in presenting Wang Mang in the worst possible light, the account that we have is designed to leave the impression of a man who was devious and hypocritical, while intent on ensuring that he would attain his own ambitions.'[45] Even Wang Mang's devotion to the classics is brushed aside as Ban Gu compares his reign to that of the early First Qin Emperor: 'Previously Qin burned the *Shijing* (Classic of Poetry) and the *Shangshu* (Venerated Documents) so as to establish private deliberations; Wang Mang chanted the Six Classics so as to spread a veneer of culture over debauched words. They reach the same destination by different paths, and both thereby perished.'[46]

In one of his prose-poems, Ban Gu gives what might stand as his most succinct judgement of the entire Wang Mang period:

> In the past, Wang Mang plotted treason,
> And the Han throne was vacant in mid-reign.
> Heaven and Man inflicted the punishment,
> And the entire empire rose up to destroy him.[47]

Behind these lines is an argument central to Ban Gu's work. In the words of Fan Ye, 'Ban Gu believed Han was the successor to the fortune of Emperor Yao and by this means had established the imperial mission.'[48] This notion that Han ruled by means of having received the fortune of Emperor Yao is noted in several places in the writings of Ban Biao and Ban Gu. This 'fortune' derives from a claim that the Liu family literally descends from the Sage emperor Yao.[49] The dubious background of Gaozu, the founder of the dynasty, is therefore only a facade, for the blood of one of the great emperors of the past courses in his veins, and in some ways inoculates Gaozu and his Liu family successors against being deposed, whatever personal weaknesses they might have.[50] Although one can

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[45] Loewe, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin*, 536.   [46] *HS*, 99B.4194.

[47] 'Eastern Capital Rhapsody', *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature*, vol. 1: *Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals*, trans. David Knechtges (Princeton, 1982), 147.

[48] *HHS*, 40A.1334.   [49] *HS*, 1.82.

[50] For an important study of this issue, see Clark, *Ban Gu's History of Early China*, 154–89.

consequently label Ban Gu an apologist for the Han, one cannot say that he refuses to criticize Han rulers, as his sometimes negative evaluations of both emperors Cheng and Ping so clearly show.[51] The point is that such criticism does not, in the final analysis, call into question the right of the Liu family to rule, for that right derives from high antiquity and gives them ample entitlement to the throne.

To understand Ban Gu's perspective we must briefly consider the historical context in which he wrote. As Hans Bielenstein has noted, Wang Mang came to power from within the structures of the Han, rather than through military action, and his reign was relatively brief. Such circumstances assured that his 'rule never quite replaced the Han dynasty in the minds of the people, and thus his reign represents an interregnum rather than a new dynasty'.[52] If this is true, there may have been nothing particularly surprising in Ban Gu's claims that the Liu family had a sacred right to rule. What was more problematic during the years in which Ban Gu produced his history would have been what we may characterize as 'big family politics', and the way this constantly impinged upon imperial government. Ban Gu's portrayal of the decline of Han power that culminated in Wang Mang seizing the throne would seem to be a warning against the influence of consort families, and yet such influence had continued in the decades following the restoration.[53] Furthermore, consorts in the later Han came from families that were already powerful. Placing a daughter in the imperial harem was not so much a route to influence as a confirmation of influence. Such families were able 'to become even more powerful than their counterparts in the earlier period'.[54]

Ban Gu must have harboured mixed feelings on this issue, for his own family's position of prestige had resulted in large measure from just such a fortunate marriage. Nevertheless, his emphasis upon the legitimacy of the Liu family, and his insistence upon the glory of the Han, must have been as much an attempt to strengthen the throne in the face of powerful families in the reigns of emperors Guangwu and Ming, as it was to counter any threat to Liu legitimacy that may have been posed by the Wang Mang interregnum. All of this points to one of the cutting edges in Ban Gu studies: while scholars have continually sought for echoes of the reign of Emperor Wu in nearly all aspects

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[51] Of Cheng: 'He happened upon an age which inherited a peaceful condition, when the superior and inferiors were in concord. Yet he gave himself up to wine and women' (*HS*, 10.330, trans. Homer H. Dubs, *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, 3 vols. (Baltimore, 1938–1955), 2:418). Of Ping, Ban Gu expresses regret that the power of Wang Mang was allowed to reassert itself after the brief but more hopeful reign of Emperor Ai (*HS*, 12.360).

[52] Bielenstein, 'Restoration of the Han Dynasty', 165.

[53] See Hans Bielenstein, 'Wang Mang and Later Han', in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 1: *The Ch'in and Han Empires (221 BC–AD 220)* (Cambridge/New York, 1986), 276.

[54] T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, *Han Social Structure* (Seattle/London, 1972), 210.

of the historiography of Sima Tan and Sima Qian, most considerations of Ban Gu do not look closely enough at the political milieu in which he was living and working.

One reason for the neglect noted above is that *Shiji*, despite the fact that it covers a much vaster period than *Hanshu*, contains a considerable amount of content that is contemporary to the lives of Sima Tan and Sima Qian. After all, the two Simas were witnesses to the reign of Emperor Wu, and Sima Tan was almost certainly an adult during the reign of Emperor Jing as well. Ban Biao was just over 20 when Wang Mang died, and his son had no living memory of any of the events recorded in *Hanshu*. Although some might wish to put Sima Qian alongside Herodotus, and Ban Gu alongside Thucydides, usually to credit the latter as a more serious historian, it is Sima Qian who more resembles Thucydides in the latter's emphasis upon contemporary history. To complete our knowledge of the Han period, including the era in which Ban Gu lived, we must turn to the third in the traditional list of China's dynastic histories: Fan Ye's *Hou Hanshu*. As noted before, insofar as Ban Gu was an historian of his own time it is found in the material he wrote that was incorporated into *Dongguan Hanji* and then subsequently into Fan Ye's text.

THE FLOWERING OF HISTORIOGRAPHY AND FAN YE'S WRITING THE FALL OF THE HAN

The more than three centuries that passed between Ban Gu and Fan Ye witnessed a veritable boom in historical writing. In fact, it is during this period that historiography was liberated from the straitjacket of classical studies. We must keep in mind that in Ban Gu's 'Bibliographic Essay', such works of history as *Shiji*, Feng Shang's continuation of the *Shiji*, and two other somewhat mysterious Han historical records are listed in the 'classics' section under the *Chunqiu* subcategory.[55] Sima Qian's need to justify his own writing of history by comparing it to Confucius' *Chunqiu* reflected a way of thinking that lived on into the time of Ban Gu himself.[56] With the decline in the prestige of Confucianism and of the classical tradition that came with the fall of Han and the period of political disunity to follow, scholars no longer thought of history as a sub-discipline of classical studies. In the next great bibliographic essay, that of the *Suishu* [History of the Sui], which was written in the first decades of the seventh century, history is designated as one of the four major bibliographic categories, with thirteen subcategories under which are listed a total of 817 works. Well before the publication of this bibliographic essay, Liu Xie devoted a separate chapter to historical writing in his masterful work of literary study *Wenxin diaolong* [The Literary

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[55] *HS*, 30.1713–14.   [56] *SJ*, 130.3296–3300; and *HS*, 100.4235.

Mind and the Carving of Dragons]—another indication that the writing of history had come to be seen as a flourishing enterprise and had gained intellectual independence from classical studies.

Most of the historical texts written during the Wei-Jin period and noted in the bibliographic essay of the Sui have been lost, and we do not intend here to survey what little remains. It is, however, apparent that during this period of time a number of attempts to fill out the history of the Later Han were made,[57] among these a book entitled *Hou Hanshu*, the same title Fan Ye was eventually to use, written as early as the mid third century, and a continuation of *Hanshu*, written in the latter years of the third century by Sima Biao, a section of which was much later incorporated into Fan Ye's history.[58] Such works were eventually 'superseded by (Fan Ye's) *Hou Hanshu*'[59] and have for the most part disappeared. The notable exception to this is Yuan Hong's *Hou Hanji* [Record of the Later Han], which is extant, and constitutes a valuable companion to Fan's later text. Yuan's history is strictly annalistic, arranging events from AD 23 to 220 in dated, chronological form, and therefore demonstrates that the older style of such classical works as the *Chunqiu* and its famous commentary the *Zuozhuan*, which had been continued in Xun Yue's earlier *Hanji* [Record of the Han], was far from dead.

Fan Ye was born in 398 into a distinguished family, and rose rapidly to a high government position. This rise ended when he became drunk on the occasion of an important state funeral in 432 and was demoted. His lesser position gave him the leisure over the next five or six years to write most of *Hou Hanshu* as a private endeavour. Fan Ye eventually came back into favour, rose again in the bureaucracy, and then became involved in a conspiracy that led to his execution in early 446. It is a curious coincidence that the major authors of the histories included as the first three in China's official collection of *The Twenty-Five Dynastic Histories* all suffered imprisonment and/or execution.

Fan Ye found few of the historical narratives and historical judgements that preceded him satisfactory, and singled Ban Gu out for criticism, finding only the latter's 'monographs' commendable.[60] Despite such criticism, Fan Ye intended to produce a work in one hundred chapters—the same round number as his predecessor, Ban Gu. His work, as originally conceived, would reduce the older five-section structure of *Shiji* and four-section structure of *Hanshu* to a three-section structure composed of 'Annals' in ten chapters, 'Traditions' in eighty chapters, and 'Monographs' in ten chapters. The latter remained unwritten at the time of

[57] For a useful summary of these works, see Bielenstein, 'Wang Mang and Later Han', 11–12.

[58] B. J. Mansvelt Beck, *The Treatises of Later Han: Their Author, Sources, Contents, and Place in Chinese Historiography* (Leiden, 1990).

[59] Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual* (rev. edn, Cambridge, Mass./London, 2000), 788.

[60] *Songshu*, 69.1829–31, trans. in Ronald C. Egan, 'The Prose Style of Fan Ye', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 39:2 (1979), 341.

his death, so that *Hou Hanshu* became the first of the dynastic histories literally structured in the 'Annals/Biography Form' (*ji zhuan ti*)—a term often used to describe Chinese dynastic histories more generally. Later on, thirty monographs written more than a century before Fan Ye by Sima Biao were edited into *Hou Hanshu*, thus accounting for the 120 chapters of most current editions.

In an extremely important study of *Hou Hanshu*, Hans Bielenstein argues that Fan Ye almost certainly had no direct access to Han archival sources, which had largely perished in the chaos surrounding the fall of the Han dynasty.[61] Thus, Fan relied almost entirely upon material that had been preserved in earlier historical texts: most importantly the *Dongguan Hanji*, a text noted above. This earlier record had the advantage of being compiled in several stages during the Later Han dynasty, and therefore had the authority of a source compiled at, or very close to, the same time as the events it recorded. *Dongguan Hanji* was, however, an official account, perhaps making use of the 'Diaries of Activity and Repose' (*qi ju zhu*)—official records of the actions of the ruler, which we know existed from at least the time of Emperor Ming.[62] Thus, despite the fact that Fan Ye had little or no access to original archival material, many documents had been preserved in the sources to which he had access. Indeed, the wealth of material in *Hou Hanshu* deriving from earlier sources leads Bielenstein to the following musings that could just as easily apply to Sima Qian and Ban Gu as well as Fan Ye:

Under the circumstances, it might well be asked whether the HHS (*Hou Hanshu*) really is a history at all. Is it not rather a collection and publication of documents, a 'diplomatarium', in the same way as the editions of manuscripts from our archives? The value of the HHS would of course remain the same if not increase, but the part of the 'historian' would be reduced to one of an editor.

The answer is that the HHS, and this is true also of all the other histories, is far more than a mere collection of documents. It is a history in its own right, in the same way as for instance the works of a Thucydides or a Livy. The Chinese historian was faced with the problem of making a selection among the documents, a step which was forced upon him by the abundance of material.[63]

In the case of Fan Ye, we might go somewhat further in praising him as an historian. We have seen earlier that Sima Qian offered brief judgements at the conclusion or the beginning of most chapters, typically introduced by 'The Grand Scribe says' (*taishigong yue*). Ban Gu offers similar comments under the name 'Eulogies' (*zan*). Fan Ye's chapter-concluding 'Eulogies', unlike those of his predecessor, are in four-character rhymed lines. But in addition to these, Fan

Ye includes sections in many of his chapters that are marked as either 'Disquisitions' (*lun*) or 'Introductions' (*xu*). A letter Fan Ye once wrote to a friend indicates that he was particularly proud of these portions of his history, even labelling them 'the most original writings in the world'.[64] Whether one can go this far is doubtful, but these sections are of genuine historiographical significance because they frequently go well beyond mere narration of events or evaluations of single individuals. Indeed they take a significant step towards what we might fairly label as 'cultural history'. This is particularly so of the 'Disquisitions' that are attached to Fan Ye's 'group biographies'. Note, for example, his revealing comments on eunuchs:

The fact of the matter is that the corporeal mutilation of eunuchs makes them defective human beings: their name and fame have no way to reflect gloriously upon their family, and their flesh and blood can never be passed on to an heir. Their evils are not detected even after scrutiny, and their propinquity to the ruler wins them his trust. Furthermore, in time they become steeped in court affairs and acquire expertise in formal precedents and usages. Hence young rulers depend upon their dutiful and proven service, and regent Empresses rely upon them to promulgate decrees; sovereigns consult them without any suspicion and become intimate with them because of their pleasing mien.[65]

Such passages as this begin to transcend a type of historiography that had long regarded history as a history of individuals. From Sima Qian on, biographies constituted the larger portion of the major historical works. Moreover, the 'Annals' sections can also be read as focusing very much on the lives and actions of emperors. The 'Monographs', as Bielenstein correctly observes, point in a new historiographical direction that focuses upon institutions rather than individuals,[66] but this portion of the text is overwhelmed by other sections, and was originally planned to constitute only ten of the one hundred chapters in Fan Ye's great history. Moreover, the trend in the Wei-Jin period was clearly in the direction of more, rather than less, emphasis upon the individual biography, sometimes what may even be called the 'quirky biography'.[67] Consequently, Fan's attempt to speak of more general features of particular groups and speculate on the way larger institutional forces had shaped history, albeit in relatively short 'Disquisitions', must be seen as a significant step forward.

Fan Ye, we should note in conclusion, does not represent major historiographical innovation. The changes in the Sima-Ban tradition we have so far noted in his work are relatively minor and reflect the formal conservatism that will continue in later standard histories. But he possessed an historical perspective that is quite different from his predecessors, and imparts to his text a particular

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[64] Egan, 'The Prose Style of Fan Ye', 341.
[65] *HHS*, 78.2537, trans. in Egan, 'The Prose Style of Fan Ye', 348.
[66] Bielenstein, 'Restoration of the Han Dynasty', 38.
[67] See Lu Yaodong, *Wei-Jin shixue de sixiang yu shehui jichu* (Taibei, 2000), 2–18.

quality. Sima Qian might have been interested in the rise and fall of the dynasties that preceded the Han, but he was producing a general history, and his focus was not upon a single dynastic unit. Ban Gu's history, in contrast, focuses on one period alone. He traces the decline of that period, but from the perspective of one who is trying to illustrate how power was usurped. His account ends with a failed act of usurpation, but is very much written from the perspective of the subsequent restoration. The Liu family is still ruling as Ban Gu writes. Fan Ye, by way of contrast, was writing two centuries after the fall of the Han. Consequently, his text is a story of restoration, decline, and final destruction, and should be read as an investigation into the causes of the fall of the Han.

Fan Ye may not be writing in a time when classical studies dominated like they did in Ban Gu's lifetime, but his perspective is very much that of a Confucian. In the words of a recent study of early Chinese historiography:

Sima Qian wandered back and forth between the Confucians and the Daoists; Ban Gu venerated Confucius alone and this is seen in the lines of his text; but Fan Ye considered Confucian teachings his spiritual lifeline, and he assimilated these into his disquisitions, using historical events to illustrate Confucian principles and Confucian principles to string together historical events.[68]

Consequently, Han decline is closely tied in *Hou Hanshu* to a decline of Confucian influence. Emperor Guangwu's success in restoring the Han results in some measure from the fact that he 'was fond of classical learning', and before he dismounted from his war chariot 'he first paid a visit to the classicists and the refined'.[69] Fan Ye even suggests the life of the dynasty was prolonged well beyond a time of general degeneration through the influence of such rigidly Confucian officials as the Grand Tutor Chen Fan, who at one time had proposed the execution of all eunuchs.[70] Fan Ye agrees with Chen Fan's views and attaches a significant portion of the blame for the decline of the Han to the growing power of eunuchs, and other signs of internal decay. Pressure from without is also a factor, but as he says in his discussion of the Western Qiang people: 'Although the Qiang constituted an external calamity, they in fact only deepened the internal illness. If one attacks but does not eradicate the roots (of the problem), then that is to nourish the illness in the heart and gut.'[71] But what is interesting in Fan Ye's analysis is that, contrary both to Sima Qian and Ban Gu, he does not lay particular blame at the feet of the last emperor in the imperial 'cycle'. In his final disquisition on Emperor Xian (189–220), he says: 'Heaven had long ago grown tired of the virtue of Han; what blame attaches to Shanyang (the former Emperor Xian), for this?'[72]

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[68] Wang Rongu, *Shizhuan tongshuo* (Taibei, 1997), 132.   [69] *HHS*, 79.2545.
[70] Ibid., 66.2171. On his proposal, see B. J. Mansvelt Beck, 'The Fall of Han', in *The Cambridge History of China*, i. 319–22.
[71] *HHS*, 77.2901.   [72] Ibid., 9.391.

In concerning ourselves here primarily with histories of the Han period, we have emphasized two of the earliest standard histories: Ban Gu's *Hanshu* and Fan Ye's *Hou Hanshu*. We should at least note that in doing so we have neglected a standard history written approximately 150 years earlier than *Hou Hanshu*: Chen Shou's *Sanguozhi*. Like Sima Qian and Fan Ye, Chen Shou's work was also undertaken as a private endeavour. Often this history is put alongside *Shiji*, *Hanshu*, and *Hou Hanshu* in a category known as 'the four histories', although it is deleted from another category, 'the three histories', which points to the tendency to regard the works we have emphasized here as essentially laying down the foundation for the larger collection of standard histories that will become, for better or for worse, the backbone of the study of the Chinese past.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

221–206 BC	Qin Dynasty
202 BC–AD 220	Han Dynasty
202 BC–AD 8	Western (Former) Han Dynasty
AD 9–23	Wang Mang Interregnum
AD 26–220	Eastern (Later) Han
AD 220–420	Wei-Jin Period
AD 220–280	Three Kingdoms

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Chapter 21

Historiography of the Six Dynasties Period (220–581)

Albert E. Dien

From the time of Confucius, history was tradition oriented. Confucius spoke in terms of absolutes, without relativity; that is, in terms of essences. These essences were eternal and allowed no change. This was a view of stasis because change was a deviation from the norm, which was true for all time.

History was the core of the Confucianists' intellectual life. It was the record, not of process, but of incident, which explains the official historiography with its minute registration of isolated facts. All events were to be weighed and measured against those eternal truths. So historical thinking in China was thus concerned with permanence and not process, and in this lies the most significant difference with the Greeks; thus one may say that the Chinese historians were the witnesses of continuity while the Greek historian was the interpreter of change.[1]

It is precisely here that one sees a number of assumptions that are implicit in the Chinese tradition. Progress was the recapturing of a golden age, precedent was the basis for change, and the sages of the past have never been surpassed. For these reasons, the record of the past was essential as a referent in creating policy and making decisions. Thus the historian fulfilled an important function in traditional Chinese society and was held in the highest esteem.

The debate between Clyde B. Sargent and Homer H. Dubs on the question of reliability and credibility was never settled to the satisfaction of the two, but it did focus on the role and procedures of the Chinese historian.[2] The assumption of both is that the historian composed his work by making a selection of the documents at his disposal. On the one hand, the documents were primary materials and thus reliable, but on the other, the histories were composed of selected portions, and the criteria used for the selection could call into question the

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[1] Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Tradition and the Classical Historian', *History and Theory*, 11:3 (1972), 292; and Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate*, vol. 1 (Berkeley, 1958), 91–2.

[2] Clyde B. Sargent, 'Subsidized History: Pan Ku and the Historical Records of the Former Han Dynasty', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 3 (1944), 119–43; and Homer H. Dubs, 'The Reliability of Chinese Histories', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 6 (1946), 23–43.

credibility of the final work. Étienne Balazs, for his part, has little to say that is good about Chinese historiography, insisting that compilation by editing and culling of original documents in the end drains the compiler of all creativity and stifles the mind. In his opinion, the process of redacting a string of facts and thus transmitting what has been recorded does not lend itself to analysis or synthesis.[3] Hans Bielenstein agrees that the result was not a 'diplomatarium' or 'white paper' which would have been comprehensive and all inclusive.[4] Yet the very process of selectivity, according to Bielenstein, moved the compiler from being a simple editor to the role of historian. The problem here is what is meant by a history and what is expected of it. What was the underlying principle that guided that historian? For whom were the histories compiled?

For Balazs, the answer is that they were written by the scholar-officials for the scholar-officials who made up the bureaucracy. The histories, in his view, are concerned with the activities of those officials. Other groups in the society appear only as peripheral figures: they are not actors in their own right.[5] 'History was written by officials for officials.'[6] As he says, even independent compilers of histories were officials, former officials, or those aspiring to be officials. He goes on to buttress his view by reviewing the range of monographs included in the histories and their contents. These all reflected the needs of officials faced with administering the country and serving in their official capacities. The monographs, and the histories as a whole, he says, were conceived as guides to administrative practice.[7]

Wolfram Eberhard had a slightly different perspective, based on his view of Chinese society as being dominated by politically powerful families whom he labelled as the gentry. The histories, he maintained, were the history of the gentry by the gentry. Basing himself on such families as he had identified in the *Weishu*, the history of the Northern Wei (386–534), he extended his analysis to cover all histories from the *Shiji* [Records of the Scribe] on down.[8] Eberhard's description of the society of early medieval China has much to recommend it, but it may be that it overstates the case when it comes to the histories. At any rate, Bielenstein took on the challenge of testing Eberhard's hypothesis, in so far as it pertained to the *Hou Hanshu* [History of the Later Han], the history of the

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[3] Étienne Balazs, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy*, ed. Arthur F. Wright, trans. H. M. Wright (New Haven, 1964), 130–2.

[4] Hans Bielenstein, *The Restoration of the Han Dynasty: With Prolegomena on the Historiography of the Hou Han Shu* (Göteborg, 1953), 23. This work was reprinted in the *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 26 (1954) with the same pagination.

[5] Balazs, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy*, 40.

[6] Ibid., 135. This view echoes that of Homer H. Dubs, 'The Reliability of Chinese Histories', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 6 (1946), 31.

[7] Balazs, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy*, 137.

[8] Wolfram Eberhard, *Das Toba-Reich Nord Chinas: Eine Soziologische Untersuchung* (Leiden, 1949), 190, 25–27, and 346–350. Bielenstein, *The Restoration of the Han Dynasty*, 24, translates the relevant passages.

Later Han (26–220), and demonstrated that the basis of selection in the *Hou Hanshu*, at least, was the role that the person played, positive or negative, in the state.[9] It is perhaps best summarized by Sargent, who said of the *Hanshu* [History of the Han], the history of the Former Han (206 BC–AD 8), that it was not a comprehensive survey of a period, but rather a record of the important events that affected the imperial house: a political history of the reigning family.[10] Given that the focus is a political one, and that education was geared toward service as an official of the state, it stands to reason that the writers and readers of the histories would be the officials, who were by and large drawn from what Eberhard terms the gentry. In this way, all the views traced above have some validity, though it would be a mistake to reduce the nature of the histories to a single, reductionist view.

The Six Dynasties Period (220–581) saw the establishment of historical writing as a well-recognized field of scholarly activity. A Han dynasty bibliography lists only eleven works of history, totalling some 45 *juan* as a subcategory of the classics.[11] The *Suishu* [History of the Sui], coming at the end of the period, has 874 works of history in 16,558 *juan* in a class of its own.

There are many reasons that underlie this expansion and maturation of the genre of historical writing in the post-Han period. It has been suggested that the need for identity, especially in the face of the attacks by the northern non-Han peoples, their conquest of the north, and the unsettled conditions that resulted, also spurred the growth of historical writings. Perhaps equally as important, the instability in the society motivated some of those from leading families, especially among those who had moved to the south to avoid the endemic warfare in the north, to provide a written record of their credentials.[12] It may be that the emergence of the individual in literary writings, and the exploration of new philosophical, intellectual, and religious realms all played a part. But perhaps more direct influences can be traced to the accumulation of material, an awareness of change over time, and the effects of living during a period of division and disorder. The expansion of the bureaucratic structure of the state in the Han and later, and the replacement of paper for bamboo and silk, resulted in an ever-expanding amount of archival material, leading to a series of summaries, codifications, and the development of new arrangements to gain control over this flood of paper. New developments in the administration of the state or states also called for reviews of past institutions, and compilations of new rituals and regulations; as the *Suishu* said, what suited one age did not necessarily suit another.

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[9] Ibid., 38.

[10] Sargent, 'Subsidized History', 143; and Clyde B. Sargent, *Wang Mang: A Translation of the Official Account of His Rise to Power as Given in the History of the Former Han Dynasty* (Shanghai, 1947), 190.

[11] The term *juan* meaning 'scroll' in this context had come to mean a chapter, and is the usual measure for the length of a work.

[12] Qiu Min, *Liuchao shixue* (Nanjing, 2003), 5–6.

Most importantly, the breakdown of the Han and the resulting three hundred years of division, with numerous regimes of varying levels of success in survival, led to a growing sense of the fragility of human institutions, with a concomitant development of local and regional identification. In a period when there were only hand-copied manuscripts, warfare also resulted in the destruction of libraries, leading to irretrievable losses. All of this fed an urgency to set things down in writing while the record was still available.

As for the official histories, during the Han the writing of history was a private affair, accomplished in off-duty hours and then presented to the throne. During the Six Dynasties, individual authorship of the histories continued but at times with official sponsorship. It was only in the Tang that the writing of history became a group project within the state bureaucracy, with routinized access to state archives, and private compilation of histories came to be forbidden. These topics and others will be explored in more detail in the following.

EARLY BIBLIOGRAPHIES

A review of the bibliographies compiled from the Han through to the Sui allows one to trace the emergence of historiography as a recognized and important genre in its own right, and also to observe the development of the many categories of documents that came under the purview of that historical enterprise. It is important to note that the official histories were not the only product of this new discipline. The Han bibliography, the earliest that we have, is contained in *Hanshu* 30, 'Yiwenzhi' (Bibliographic Monograph). This, in turn, was based on the bibliographic work of Liu Xiang and his son Liu Xin. In the introduction to the monograph, Ban Gu, compiler of the *Hanshu*, wrote a short introductory statement about the bibliographic efforts of the Liu father and son which resulted in Liu Xin's *Qilüe* [Seven Summaries]. The *Qilüe* is no longer extant, but it served as the basis of the bibliographic monograph in *Hanshu*. Liu Xiang, Liu Xin's father, is usually credited with an earlier bibliography, the *Bielu* [Separate Record], or *Qilüe bielu*, but it is now thought by some to have been only his notes on a number of books and not a separate work. The seven classes into which Liu Xin organized his bibliography also represent the first classification scheme in China. The seven are:

1. General Introduction
2. The Six Arts, or the Classics
3. Various Expository Writers
4. Poetry and Rhapsodies
5. Military Writings
6. Astronomy and the Occult Sciences
7. Medicine and Spells

Note that there is as yet no separate category for historical writings. From what is said in the *Hanshu*, it would seem that the *Qilüe* consisted of a general introduction as well as a summary of the contents of each title listed. Ban Gu divided the first *lüe* and placed segments of it at appropriate places throughout his essay. Further, the titles were listed without Liu Xin's notes, which is especially unfortunate since so many of the items have been lost. The commentaries to *Hanshu*, though of later date, supply some of the missing details.

After the *Hanshu* bibliography, a number of others were compiled in the post-Han period, but unfortunately these have not survived. However, it was at this time that the classification scheme that was to become the standard one in traditional China emerged. This was the fourfold classification scheme that divided all writings into four classes: classics, history, exposition, and literature. The fourfold scheme seems to have summed up the significant areas of the intellectual tradition so neatly and compactly that it survived all attempts to unseat it, but it remained a viable one only by means of the extensive use of categories which the four branches strained to encompass. It is clear from what one can learn of these early bibliographies that historical writings enjoyed a burgeoning period of development from the earliest years of the Six Dynasties. It is only with the bibliography of the *Suishu*, however, that the full range of the specific titles is available.

As noted earlier, the first surviving bibliography after the *Hanshu* monograph is that in *Suishu*. This is the 'Jingjizhi' (Monograph on Classics and Writings) compiled with other monographs in 641–656 as the *Wudaishi zhi* [Monographs for the Five Dynastic Histories] and subsequently joined to *Suishu*, *juan* 32–35, as the bibliographic monograph of that history. The four *juan* are each devoted to one of the four classes of writings, with the sections on Buddhism and Daoism appended to the last. This is the first time that one sees the four classes referred to as 'Classics', 'Histories', 'Expository Writings', and 'Literature', their standard names from then on, but there is evidence that the terms were already in use in the middle of the sixth century. A long introductory essay traces the evolution of written materials and historical archives; it then quotes the *Hanshu* introductory essay cited above, adds other materials, and finally traces in great detail the history of imperial collections and the compilation of the bibliography.

In format the bibliography resembles that of the *Hanshu*. Under each of the four classes, the entries are divided into categories, and each entry is listed with the number of *juan* below. In smaller characters are given the period and author, often with his official title. Each category ends with a count of items and number of *juan*, and that figure, combined with the numbers for lost titles, is added in smaller characters. Then follows an essay on the topic of that category, and another general essay at the end of each class. The listing of Buddhist and Daoist materials is given in essay form, along with the number of items and number of *juan* at the end, with no division into categories.

The *Suishu* section on history has thirteen categories, representing the kinds of writing in this field that had emerged since the compilation of the *Hanshu* bibliography. As we shall see, more than half of the categories in this class are usually not considered to be histories in the usual sense of the word. Rather, they include records and codices—often the material from which historians might draw upon in their writing. In a sense, what are taken to be histories in traditional China are registers, evolving from the most basic kinds of records to one that is highly selective, drawing upon a number of sources, but which in its presentation never loses that quality of being a record. For that reason, the term *shi*, usually translated as 'historian' or 'scribe' when applied to a person, might more aptly be rendered as 'recorder'. The list of categories is as follows:

		Titles	*Juan*
1.	Standard histories	67	3083
2.	Ancient histories	34	666
3.	Miscellaneous histories	72	917
4.	Usurper histories	27	335
5.	Court diaries	44	1189
6.	Prior matters	25	404
7.	Official system	27	336
8.	Ceremonial rules	59	2029
9.	Penal codes	35	712
10.	Miscellaneous biographies	217	1286
11.	Geography	139	1432
12.	Genealogies	41	360
13.	Bibliographies	30	214
	Totals	817	13,264

The contrast between the eleven titles of historical works in 45 *juan* listed in the *Hanshu* of the first century and the 817 titles in 13,264 *juan* of the *Suishu* in the sixth century is an impressive indicator of the evolution in historical writing that took place in the intervening years represented by the two bibliographies.[13]

Many of these categories would have supplied the raw material for the compilation of histories. There is some question when the Court diaries (no. 5) began to be compiled, but it was certainly by the Han. The bibliography lists a complete set for the Jin, only for one reign of the Southern Qi and Liang, almost all the Chen reigns, a large one in 330 *juan* for all of the Northern Wei, and for one reign of the Northern Zhou and of the Sui. There was also a court diary for the 'illegitimate' Southern Yan attached here for lack of a better place. It is surprising that so much of this material survived the disorders of the time.

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[13] For the *Suishu* numbers see *Suishu* 33.992. A note there indicates that if lost works were included, the numbers would be 874 titles in 16,558 *juan*.

The category of 'Prior matters' (no. 6) refers to repositories of documents from each branch of the administration to serve as reference for precedents. These apparently were particularly vulnerable to loss with the accession of a new dynasty, and the compilers of the bibliography collected what they could. The categories for the Official system (no. 7), Ceremonial rules (no. 8), and Penal codes (no. 9) involved prescriptive rules and tables.[14] Other categories, such as Geography (no. 11), Genealogies (no. 12), and Bibliographies (no. 13) are self-explanatory, although each has many interesting features.[15] What is common to all of them is that they are primarily records of an archival nature—of registers, reports, and so forth. As such they share a common characteristic with the writing of history in this period, and we need to look at the process and results of the writing of history before turning our attention to the first four categories in this section entitled *shi* or 'history'.

RECORDS AND ARCHIVES

The recording of the words and activities of the emperor can be traced back to earliest time in the Chinese tradition, and this practice evolved into the court diaries which came to be the primary material for the writing of the state histories.[16] Offices specifically charged with this responsibility appear in the Later Han, with the title of *zhuzuo* or editors attached to the Dongguan Library. In the reign of Mingdi (58–75), Ban Gu was named Lantai *lingshi* or Directing Scribe at the Lantai, another imperial library, and ordered to compile the annals of the preceding emperor. These appointments marked the separation of those involved in compiling historical records from those responsible for the calendar and astronomical records, which had been the primary duties of Sima Qian in the preceding Former Han period. According to Qiu Min, the state support of historical writings stemmed from its use to establish the legitimacy of the dynasty and to reveal the perfidy of its enemies, to provide lessons of the past to guide policy decisions, and finally, to celebrate the merits of its founders so as to transmit that record to the future generations.[17]

In the post-Han period there were specific officials who drew up the court diaries. In addition, the duty of compiling *guoshi* or state histories—periodic

[14] Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 213–22 gives details about each of the titles.
[15] Ibid., 179–206 (Geography), 173–8 (Genealogies), 223–7 and the literature cited there (Bibliographies).
[16] For the organization and development of the offices related to the recording of events and compilation of these historical materials in the pre-Tang period, see Jin Yufu, *Zhongguo shixueshi* (Beijing, 1962), 77–80 and the tables on 88–89; Denis C. Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History under the T'ang* (Cambridge, 1992), 5–8; Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 24; and on court diaries, see ibid., 147–53.
[17] Ibid., 38–9.

compilations of the history of the ongoing dynasty—was also taken on by these officials, but apparently from the Southern Qi (479–501) on, that work was assigned to other officials. The division of these two activities—that of the maintenance of the court diaries, and the compilation of a more generalized state history—was formalized in the Northern Qi (550–577) by the establishment of the Imperial Diary Office (*qijusheng*) and the History Office (*shiguan*). The latter was headed by an official under the supervision of the chancellor. There are many instances of the history office being held concurrently (*jian*) by men with other posts. So the responsibility of drawing up the records could also be undertaken by senior officials of the Secretariat (*zhongshu*) and Chancellery (*menxia*) departments. As the organization of the history officials became looser, fewer completed works emerged from the state apparatus and more came to be done privately, or the initial stages could be official but then finished privately. Over the Six Dynasties period, it has been estimated that the greater part of writing was done privately and that official works made up only ten to twenty per cent of the total.[18] The *Suishu* puts it rather dramatically: 'Therefore this crowd of deadbeats look about open-eyed in the imperial library, while those gentlemen who have something worthwhile to say wield their brushes under thatched roofs.'[19] Out of these beginnings came the well-entrenched and highly organized historical bureau of the Tang, to which the eminent historiographer Liu Zhiji was attached.[20]

The results of all this record-keeping, as well as the enormous quantities of archival material, were housed in the imperial libraries and departmental repositories, none of which was available for public viewing. Since histories were basically state-centred, with the focus on the court, anyone writing a history in the first instance had to have access to those materials. In many cases the difference between state-sponsored histories and privately written histories was simply whether there was an official commissioned to compile the history, as against one written in his own time by an official with access to those primary materials, and presented to the throne upon completion. Other privately written histories could mean those based on revisions of pre-existing histories, perhaps with some additional material that had become available. Basically, the rationale for these secondary histories was an improvement in the style of writing, or slight changes in the selection of what was to be included rather than a major revision of what had been presented earlier.

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[18] Ibid., 5–6 and 40–1. For a detailed discussion of the history offices in the various dynasties, see ibid., 28–37; and on standardization, see ibid., 39–40.

[19] *Suishu* 33.992. The Chinese term *shisu* means to draw a salary but do nothing to deserve it. The desire to achieve the fame of a Sima Qian or Ban Gu, or at least Fan Ye or Chen Shou, may also have been a motivation.

[20] For the development of the history bureau during the Tang see Twitchett, *The Writing of Official History under the T'ang*.

TYPES OF HISTORY

The first category in the *Suishu* bibliography is entitled 'Standard histories', which in this case means those works whose organization of contents follows the *Shiji* and were basically composed of chronological annals (*benji*) and accounts (*zhuan*), sometimes translated as biographies.[21] Some also have monographs and tables. This sort of history is often termed the 'composite style'. In addition to the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, and including works of commentary and glossaries based on those two, there are fifteen dealing with the Later Han, seven with the Three Kingdoms period, eight with the Jin, three each for the Liu Song (420–478), Southern Qi (479–501) and Liang (502–556), one for the Chen (557–581), two for the Northern Wei (386–534), one for the Northern Zhou (557–581), and one comprehensive history on the order of the *Shiji*, covering the period of the Three Emperors down to the Liang, compiled by Emperor Wu of the Liang himself.[22] Of these compiled during the Six Dynasties Period, five have survived; they will be reviewed below.[23] The 'composite' style of history of individual dynasties was the most popular format. In the *Suishu* bibliography, the history class makes up one-third of the bibliography, and of those, the 'composite' entries occupy a half. The modern scholar Qiu Min says the reason for its popularity is that it best suited the feudal system, with the emperor at the centre in the annals, with ministers, relatives, in-laws, and others relegated to the biographies, providing a clear picture of the different strata in the state.[24]

The second category, termed the 'Ancient histories', includes works in the chronicle or *biannian* style, following the pattern of the Confucian classic *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals]. The name 'ancient' was applied to this style because the discovery of the *Zhushu jinian* [Bamboo Annals] in 281, a chronicle of Wei of the Warring States period, in the style of the *Chunqiu*, confirmed the bibliographers in their belief that this was the ancient form of histories.[25] In this, the entries are filed under year, month, and day. The days are indicated by a sixty-cycle designation. Seasons of the year are also inserted. Occasionally, generalizations, or events which are not dated, are placed at appropriate spots. It is said that this style focuses on events, while the 'composite' style focuses on individuals. Two works in this style included in the Sui bibliography

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[21] The use of the term *zhengshi* to mean the series of dynastic histories considered standard, rather than the *jizhuan* style, first occurs in the Song.

[22] Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 96–8. The work came to 600 *juan*. A work of that size would have been compiled on his orders, and he would have personally written the prefaces and comments.

[23] Ibid., 67–96, gives details on those works that have not survived.   [24] Ibid., 99–100.

[25] On the *Zhushu jinian*, see sub Chu shu chi nien, in Michael Loewe (ed.), *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide* (Berkeley, 1993), 39–47; and *Suishu* 33.959.

are the *Hanji* [Record of the Han] by Xun Yue, and *Hou Hanji* [Record of the Later Han] by Yuan Hong.[26] Many works of this style continued to be written in the Six Dynasties period. These usually contain the term *chunqiu* (or *yangqiu*) in their title. Some thirty-four titles of this Ancient Histories genre are listed in *Suishu* 33.959–62, but few have survived.[27]

While the chronicle style never gained the status of the composite style, it remained a popular format, and many such works were compiled. Among the reasons for its popularity, it followed the earliest tradition of historical writing—the *Chunqiu* and *Zuozhuan* [Zuo Tradition], which also had the status of being part of the Confucian canon. Furthermore, the success of such works as the *Hanji* of Xun Yue also had much influence. Finally, the style had its advantages in that, compared to the composite format, it was brief and to the point, and it brought together the information on any event into one place, while such information in the composite format would be scattered throughout the work. Nevertheless, the chronicle style did have deficiencies: it did not give the emperors a central position, and because the entries were so concise, the accommodation of the amount of information was limited. In the end, the ascendancy of the composite style prevented histories written in the chronicle style from gaining wide acceptance and audience.[28]

The third category, 'Miscellaneous histories', is rather a hotchpotch, and for that reason perhaps the most interesting. As the bibliographical monograph in the *Suishu* states:

In the period of the emperors Ling (168–188) and Xian (189–220), the world was in great disorder, and the history officials (or history offices) lost their habitual observances. Gentles (*shi*) of wide knowledge and perception, grieving over its abrogation, each recorded what they had heard or seen, in order to prevent the loss (of a knowledge of what was transpiring). After this those of talent emulated them and there were very many works. Further, since the Later Han scholars frequently copied and brought together old histories to make into one book, sometimes starting from the Three Majesties (mythological rulers), some limiting it to recent times, and each having its own purpose, the style and organization were not classical. Further, there is the talk of the alleys and byways, absurd and strange, reckless and extravagant, the truth and falsehood unfathomable. Still, most of these deal with the affairs of emperors and kings, of men of perspicacity and of virtue; one must select broadly and read widely in order to dip out what are their essential parts.[29]

One of the works listed in this category is the *Huayang guozhi* [Records of the States South of Mount Hua], which still survives. This is a gazetteer of southwest China, one of the oldest surviving local histories, which touches on the geography, economy, and culture of that area, and contains much material not

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[26] On the *Hou Hanji*, see Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 258–72.
[27] Ibid., 101–47 gives a detailed account of what is known of those that did not survive.
[28] Ibid., 145–7.   [29] *Suishu* 33.962.

found elsewhere.[30] One also finds in this category two works entitled *Liang huangdi shilu* [Veritable Records of the Emperor of Liang], the first recording the events of Emperor Wu (r. 502–549) of the Liang, in three *juan*, and the second, the events of Emperor Yuan (r. 552–554) in five *juan*. These *shilu* or 'veritable records' would appear to be the first instances of compiling a record of each reign, based on the court diaries and other materials, a practice that later became standard. Such veritable records then became the main source of the *guoshi* or state histories.[31]

The fourth category entitled 'Usurper histories' includes the histories of the ephemeral states in the north during the period of disorder. The *Suishu* deplores the lack of order of that time, but it does say that these states did exhibit the proper bonds of loyalty and righteousness between rulers and ministers, and dutifulness in administering the state and caring for the people, so these accounts were deemed worth preserving. Also included here is what was left of the internal documents of those states that had been conquered by the Northern Wei.[32]

Finally, 'Miscellaneous biographies' (no. 10) contains, as might be expected, collections of biographies under a number of rubrics, such as worthies of a particular period or locality, Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, recluses, filial paragons, famous literati, lineages of a particular place, eminent women, and a few biographies of individuals. Anomalous stories of the supernatural were included here for want of a better place.

According to Lu Yaodong, a modern scholar, the miscellaneous biographies represent most adequately the special nature of the Wei-Jin historiography. The fall from authority of Confucianism at the end of the Han allowed a new freedom, an emergence of individualism that was reflected in the miscellaneous biographies, which took people as its focus. Counting up the *biezhuan* or independent biographies in the *Suishu* and other citations in encyclopaedias, there are 210 from the end of Han to the Eastern Jin, after which the group biographies, such as Filial Sons and Loyal Ministers, reach a peak. The popularity of the miscellaneous biographies category is evidence of a separation from classical studies as society underwent a transition during the Six Dynasties period.[33] For Qiu Min the expansion of great family influence, new ventures in philosophical thought, and the cult of classifying personalities all influenced the writing of history, and the recording of the events in the lives of various sorts of people stemmed from these factors.[34]

[30] J. Michael Farmer, '*Huayang guo zhi* by Chang Qu (*c.* 291–*c.* 361)', unpublished MS; and Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 330–45.

[31] *Suishu* 33.960–961. The term *shilu* occurs in the Six Dynasties in the title of some books, such as *Dunhuang shilu* or, more commonly, in its literal meaning of a true or accurate record in reference to some historical writing. See also the discussion in Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 153–7.

[32] *Suishu* 33.964; and Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 207–13.

[33] Lu Yaodong, *Wei Jin shixue ji qita* (Taibei, 1998), 3–13.

[34] Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 158–72.

FIVE DYNASTIC HISTORIES

The richness of this historiographical tradition as revealed in the *Suishu* bibliography is impressive, and one can only regret that so little has come down to us. There were five dynastic histories written during the Six Dynasties period that have survived. These are the *Sanguozhi*, *Hou Hanshu*, *Songshu*, *Nan Qishu*, and *Weishu*. These will be treated in the chronological order in which they were written, rather than according to the sequence of the dynasties they represent.

1. *Sanguozhi* by Chen Shou

The *Sanguozhi* [Records of the Three Kingdoms] in 65 *juan* was compiled by Chen Shou. It covers the states of Wei (220–265) in 30 *juan*; Shu-Han (221–265) in 15 *juan*; and Wu (220–280) in 20 *juan*. Since the official policy of the Jin, under whom Chen Shou served, treated the line of legitimate succession as passing from the Han through the Wei to the Jin, only the section on Wei has the basic annals. The other two consist only of biographies, even of their rulers. There are no monographs or tables.

Chen Shou, a native of Sichuan, studied with the historian Qiao Zhou, focusing on the *Shangshu*, the *Chunqiu* with its classical commentaries, as well as the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, and this provided him with a solid base in the historiographical field.[35] His career had a rocky start but, after the Jin dynasty was established in 265, he enjoyed the patronage of Zhang Hua, an important official who appreciated his talent and became his patron. Despite being under a cloud, he was appointed to posts in the Imperial Library that were responsible for compiling the court diary (*qijuzhu*) and other historical materials. When Wu, the last of the Three States, was conquered in 280, Chen began to compile the *Sanguozhi*. His work very quickly gained an excellent reputation; it is said that someone else who was also engaged in compiling a *Weishu* saw his and gave up. Despite the support of Zhang Hua, Chen's later career did not go well; he died in 297 at the age of 65. Chen was a prolific writer and his list of titles was impressive, but of his many works, only the *Sanguozhi* survives. The three parts—for Wei, Wu, and Shu-Han—at times circulated separately, but since the Song (960–1279) they have been treated only as one work.

The sources used by Chen in compiling the *Sanguozhi* differed according to the state being treated.[36] For the Wei, he relied on a number of other works, such as a *Weishu* by Wang Chen in 40 *juan*, an official compilation, and the *Weilue*

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[35] Chen Shou has a biography in *Jinshu* 81.2137–38, but that in the *Huayang guozhi* by Chang Qu has more details; cf. Liu Lin (ed.), *Huayang guozhi jiaozhu* (Chengdu, 1984), 11.849.

[36] Robert Joe Cutter and William Gordon Crowell, *Empresses and Consorts: Selections from Chen Shou's* Records of the Three States *with Pei Songzhi's Commentary* (Honolulu, 1999), 61–81.

by Yu Huan in 50 *juan*, a privately written work; for the Wu, there was a *Wushu* by Wei Zhao, 55 *juan*, an official compilation, and the *Weilu* by Zhang Bo, a private work in 30 *juan*. As the Shu state had not established officials to make records, there was no court diary, and Chen had to collect the material himself.[37] Since sources were so varied, the quality is said to suffer in places. His sources for the Wu were excellent, and as a result Chen's treatment of the Wu is considered to be of a high quality, though his treatment of the Wei suffered from errors in one of his sources, Wang Chen's work, that Chen had incorporated. For the Shu, for which there was no earlier history, that section tends to be too schematic.

Despite the positive reception of his work, Chen's biography in the *Jinshu* [History of the Jin] cites some contemporary criticisms of the work. In one instance he is said to have solicited a bribe to include biographies of two eminent men of the Wei. The sons of the men involved did not give the bribe, and so no biographies of the two were included. However, it has been pointed out that the two men were famous literati who had played no political role, and so did not rate individual biographies. Instead, they received notices attached to the biography of a writer of greater renown. Further, since the two men had been executed together with the men of their family, how could there have been sons to approach Chen Shou in the first place? Another charge was made that during the Shu period, Chen Shou's father had been badly treated by Zhuge Liang, the famous premier of that state, and Chen Shou himself had been slighted by one of Zhuge Liang's sons. As a result Chen Shou took the opportunity to avenge himself by including critical remarks. Later historians, however, say the charge is groundless.[38]

The modern scholar Du Weiyun has summed up the positive points of Chen Shou's work by saying that his judgement was appropriate, that he was very careful in evaluating his material, that his narrative is well written, and that his wording is persuasive. On the negative side it may be said that in places he was too sketchy, and that he avoided matters that might offend the rulers under whom he served, thus failing to maintain the proper standards as an historian.[39]

Liu Zhiji, the eminent Tang historian, criticized Chen Shou for beginning his history with the disorders at the end of the Han, as early as 184, not with its fall in 220.[40] Du responds that an account of the events of those early years was necessary to understand the collapse of the Han and the emergence of the three states. Du also praises Chen's skill in working within the framework of the history's structure, by treating the details of the disorders caused by Dong Zhuo, one

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[37] On this point, see esp. ibid., 186 n. 35, and the literature cited there.

[38] For details of this defence of Chen Shou, see Du Weiyun, *Zhongguo shixueshi*, vol. 2 (Taibei, 2002), 102; and see also Cutter and Crowell, *Empresses and Consorts*, 69–72 for a discussion of these issues.

[39] Du, *Zhongguo shixueshi*, 95.   [40] Liu Zhiji, *Shitong tongshi* (Taibei, 1993), section 12, p. 96.

of the warlords of the time, in Dong's biography because Cao Cao, the successful warlord who made a puppet of the last Han ruler, had not yet taken on the administration of the state, and thus it would have been inappropriate to include those events in Cao's basic annals. The *Hou Hanji* by Yuan Hong had included both a ten-point memorial urging Cao Pei, Cao Cao's heir, to take the throne and Cao Pei's ten-point response. That same sensitivity as to what was appropriate led Chen to omit these documents, including any mention of the award of the 'Nine Bestowals'—an indication that Cao Pei would soon force the last Han emperor to abdicate and then take the throne himself. Fortunately for the modern historian, that memorial and its response have survived despite Chen's delicacy in the matter.

Du then takes up Chen Shou's care in textual criticism. There is no denying that there are errors in the *Sanguozhi*.[41] While Pei Songzhi, in his commentary, to be treated below, pointed out lapses, still he praised Chen's judgement in selecting what were the more credible accounts. One example is that Chen rejected the story of the death of Sun Ce, of the state of Wu, as told in the *Soushenji* [In Search of the Supernatural]—a collection of anomalous stories written by Gan Bao about AD 300—that before Sun died he kept seeing, in a mirror, the image of the Daoist leader of a rebellion whom he had killed. Instead, Chen wrote that Sun had been killed in an ambush by the followers of someone he had previously slain. Avoiding the *Soushenji* as a source, with its emphasis on ghosts and other supernatural phenomena, would seem to us to be a matter of course, not necessarily evidence of good judgement.

Critics give high marks to Chen's literary style, placing it in the company of the *Shiji*, *Hanshu*, and *Hou Hanshu*. Nevertheless, the *Sanguozhi* has been faulted for what it does not include. Institutional innovations, such as the *tuntian* military colonies established by Cao Cao, are barely discussed. The important intellectual developments, such as the work of such eminent philosophers as Wang Bi, He Yan, and Xiahou Xuan, are reduced to a brief mention, and the names of distinguished literati are in effect simply listed. For this reason, the extensive commentary by Pei Songzhi is vitally important.[42]

Pei Songzhi's commentary, completed in 429, was a unique and unprecedented work, and it deeply influenced later historians.[43] According to Pei's memorial in presenting his work to the throne,[44] his intention was to fill in where Chen's had

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[41] Du cites the *Nianershi zhaji* by Zhao Yi (1727–1814); cf. 6.71 ff. (Taibei, n.d.).

[42] Du, *Zhongguo shixueshi*, 106–9; and Cutter and Crowell, *Empresses and Consorts*, 66, which quotes Carl Leban's unpublished dissertation.

[43] Carl Leban, review of Rafe de Crespigny, *The Records of the Three Kingdoms: A Study in the Historiography of San-Kuo Chih* (Canberra, 1970), in *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 99:2 (1972), 344.

[44] *Song quanwen* in Yan Kejun, *Quan shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* (Taibei, n.d.), 17.1b–2b. The memorial is included in some editions of the *Sanguozhi*, but not in the Zhonghua shuju edition.

lacunae important enough to be addressed, to present different versions if no judgement as to the correct one was possible, to correct obvious errors or where the text was not credible, and finally to add material where Chen Shou's text was inadequate and in his opinion it was necessary to do so. The amount of material added by Pei was almost as lengthy as that of the original, and he cited over 200 titles.[45] The usual commentaries simply elucidate pronunciations and meanings of terms, or discuss such details as geographic locations, but Pei went far beyond that. Some critics, such as Liu Zhiji, have criticized his prolixity, but since some three-quarters of the works that he cited at length have not survived, it is that very prolixity that makes his contribution so valuable.[46]

In summary, the *Sanguozhi* has been recognized as one of the four pre-eminent histories, along with the *Shiji*, *Hanshu*, and *Hou Hanshu*. To quote Carl Leban, 'Chen Shou's monumental *Three State's Treatises* was a product of an early period of the most vigorous, even strident, dynamism. As such, it presents formidable but important historiographical problems of source, content, format, and bias.'[47] Due to limitations of space, these can only be touched on here.

2. *Hou Hanshu* by Fan Ye

The fourth of the four ranking standard histories is the *Hou Hanshu* [History of the Later Han] by Fan Ye.[48] Fan came from a family whose members held high offices, and he himself had a talent for composition, so his prospects for appointment to office and advancement were good.[49] His career was going well, including an appointment as Vice Director of the Imperial Library, when in 432 he became inebriated at the funeral of a prince's mother, misbehaved, and was transferred out to a provincial post. He employed his new-found leisure, and perhaps his connections with the staff members of his former post, to pull together a number of histories of the Later Han to make a new *Hou Hanshu*. Not much is known about the actual circumstances of its compilation, but it was probably during the ten years that he spent away from the capital. Finally returning to the court, he became involved in a plot and was executed.[50]

[45] Cutter and Crowell, *Empresses and Consorts*, 149, provides a character count that disproves the frequently made statement that Pei's commentary was twice or even triple that of Chen's text.

[46] The editors of the Zhonghua shuju edition of the *Sanguozhi*, (Beijing, 1962), 4, dismiss the points made by the critics as minor, and say that they miss Pei's strengths. See also Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 247–57 and 313–30.

[47] Leban, review of Rafe de Crespigny, 344.

[48] Much of this discussion relies upon the detailed analysis in Bielenstein, *The Restoration of the Han Dynasty*; see also Du, *Zhongguo shixueshi*, 9–74; and Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 272–96.

[49] Fan Ye has biographies in *Songshu* 69.1819–31 and *Nanshi* 33.849–56.

[50] It has been suggested that because there was ill-will between his family and that of Shen Yue, the compiler of his biography in the *Songshu*, the account of this affair is not objective. In the Qing dynasty the scholar Wang Mingsheng and others argued that he did not take part in the plot and was falsely implicated.

Fan Ye, living two centuries after the end of the Later Han, of course, had to rely on earlier histories. Much had been done to establish a historical record during the Later Han itself. The compilation of a state history, entitled the *Dongguan Hanji* [Han Records of the Eastern Lodge], in which eminent scholars including Ban Gu took part, was drawn up in three stages, eventually reaching 144 *juan*. As Hans Bielenstein has remarked, it was of great value that 'the historians always described events which were close to their own time, and which often had been witnessed by themselves'.[51]

Even before the fall of the dynasty, various smaller works were being compiled, and these increased after the dynasty ended.[52] As the time between that end and the date of compilation increased, there was less new material available and the reliance on previous works increased, as was the case with Fan Ye. Since so many of the earlier works have been lost, in large part because his compilation found greater favour, it is difficult to trace his sources in detail. He largely based himself on the *Dongguan Hanji* but did not follow it in all matters. He also made much use of a *Hou Hanshu* by Hua Qiao (Jin), because some of his postscripts at the end of chapters match those in what remains of Hua's work. It is generally believed that he used what was best in each and discarded the rest. Fan's original plan was to have one hundred *juan*, but at his death only the annals and biographies—ninety in all—were completed, and the monographs remained undone. Some time later, eight monographs from the *Xu Hanshu* [History of the Han Continued] of Sima Biao (Jin) were divided into 30 *juan* and circulated on their own for a period, but in 1022 permission was granted by the court at the time to append them to Fan's work, bringing the total number of *juan* to 120. The subjects of the monographs are the calendar, rites, sacrifices, astronomy, the five phases, geography, officials, and chariots and court apparel.

Fan Ye's *Hou Hanshu* has always been held in high esteem on the basis of its clarity of writing, its ability to synthesize and reduce the redundancy of its sources, its truthful account of events, and its discussions that offer background explanations. Liu Zhiji thought the postscripts to the biographies too verbose and laudatory, even likening them to Buddhist sermons that stated the point and then followed with verses. Du Weiyun, on the contrary, finds the words full of meaning, moving, even vivid, putting the reader into the events.[53] In any case, recognition of the superiority of Fan's *Hou Hanshu* resulted in the virtual disappearance of its rivals, which were gradually lost.[54]

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[51] Bielenstein, *The Restoration of the Han Dynasty*, 11.
[52] See the lists ibid., 13; and Jin, *Zhongguo shixueshi*, 50–1.
[53] Du, *Zhongguo shixueshi*, 113–33.
[54] Bielenstein, *The Restoration of the Han Dynasty*, 14, estimates that of the 973 *juan* of earlier histories of the Later Han, only some 83 remain—a loss of 91 per cent.

3. *Songshu* by Shen Yue

A state history (*guoshi*) of the Song dynasty, established in 420, was compiled during the course of its existence. The earliest section, completed during the Yuanjia period (424–53) by He Chengtian, had annals, two monographs (on astronomy and musical pitch and the calendar), and biographies. A little later, Shan Qianzhi and Su Baosheng continued it, bringing it to the year 453, when the latter compiler was executed, and in 462 another official, Xu Yuan, added the final section, bringing it to 65 *juan* in all. Some ten years later (478) the Song came to an end, and was succeeded by the Qi dynasty. In 487 Shen Yue, who held a post as historian, was ordered to draw up a *Songshu* [History of the Song], and by the following year he had completed the annals and biographies and presented them to the court; perhaps as much as ten years later he completed the monographs. So, in all, there are 100 *juan*: ten annals, eight monographs in 30 *juan*, and 60 *juan* of biographies. The greater part of it was the work of Xu Yuan. Shen filled in the last part of the dynasty, from 462 to 478, which is why he could accomplish his task so quickly, and yet he is credited for the whole.[55]

Shen Yue faced the problem of revising a previous dynasty's work, which had observed the taboos and honorifics of nomenclature of that dynasty, while having to observe those of the dynasty under which he was serving. He also had to deal with the inclusion of the biographies of his grandfather and father (the latter had been put to death by the Song) in a way that would avoid being criticized as being biased. His contribution was to take what had been done down to the end of the dynasty, fill in the gaps, edit the whole, write some prefaces and postscripts/comments (*zanlun* which begin 'the historian says'), and finally, complete some monographs, those on music and auspicious omens.[56]

Shen's *Songshu* has not been well received by the critics, and he has long been said to have been a poor historian.[57] One example that is cited is his treatment of the transition from the Jin to the Song, eliding the poisoning of the last Jin ruler and, instead, highlighting the correct behaviour of the reluctance of the founder Liu Yu to ascend the throne, with no mention of the coup itself.[58] In his revision of what had been written during the Song, Shen should have corrected that bias. In dealing with the Song-Qi transition, he probably felt impelled to treat the Qi founder, Xiao Daocheng, in an adulatory way; the murder of one of the last puppet rulers of the Song is said to have been a just act because the young emperor was such a depraved creature. Likewise, according to Wang

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[55] Wang Shumin, *Zhongguo shixueshi gangyao* (Beijing, 1997), 76–8; and see also Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 296–307.

[56] Richard B. Mather, *The Poet Shen Yüeh (441–513): The Reticent Marquis* (Princeton, 1988), 26–36.

[57] Zhao Yi, 9.108–115 reviews many of the areas that have been criticized.

[58] Wang, *Zhongguo shixueshi gangyao*, 77.

Shumin, a modern scholar, he catered to the powerful families of his time, giving undue prominence to members of the Wang and Xiao families despite a lack of any special merit. At the same time, in the case of Xu Yuan, upon whose work he depended, Xu's biography was placed in the section on imperial favourites; Bao Zhao, who was a famous literatus, only had a notice appended to that of a prince. Critics such as Liu Zhiji said Shen paid too much attention to style, and not enough to content. Liu Zhiji was also very critical of Shen's emphasis on omens and interpretations of events based on astrology, the five phases, and omenology, and he questioned why he paid so much attention to omens and had no chapter on families and clans which would have been much more important.

Still, Shen's work has been given positive credit on a number of points. Richard Mather has observed that Shen's greatest contribution was his monograph on music, which includes *yuefu* (music bureau) songs from early Han on, music history and theory, and detailed descriptions of musical instruments.[59] The monograph on geography traces the name changes in the south from the Three Kingdoms period on, and the migrant administrations are very clear. He also gave population figures for the various provincial administrations. By going back earlier than the beginning of the Song, he allows the reader to obtain a rather complete sense of institutions such as the rites and music; indeed, his tracing back into earlier periods in order to see the changes over time is one of his special merits.

As for the criticisms that the work is too verbose and includes too much extraneous material, it is precisely this characteristic that, on the contrary, is a positive feature for the modern historian, since it gives a clearer insight into the beliefs and practices of that period. What is condemned as superstitions in the monographs on the omens, for example, is valuable material, precisely because it reveals much about the belief system of that day. The biographies contain mentions of ghosts and visitors from the other world that come to be screened out in later histories, especially in the histories compiled by the personnel of the Office of History in the Tang. Also, as in the comments on the biography of Xie Lingyun, Shen developed the theory of rhymes which has had a far-reaching significance in the writing of poetry. Finally, one must take into account Shen's difficult position in an unstable time. He himself had held office in both the Song and Qi states, his grandfather had been a key figure in the founding of the Song dynasty, and his father was executed during that time, so he was vulnerable to attack and criticism since he was writing about contemporary events. Under those conditions, the *Songshu* is perhaps a better work than could be expected. It is certainly a more interesting read than many of the others that cover the history of the Six Dynasties period.

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[59] Mather, *The Poet Shen Yüeh*, 31.

4. *Nan Qishu* by Xiao Zixian

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the *Nan Qishu* [History of the Southern Qi], the history of the Southern Qi dynasty (479–502), is the compiler. Xiao Zixian was the grandson of Xiao Daocheng, the founder of the Qi dynasty; this is the only one of the standard histories to be written by a member of its ruling house. Xiao Zixian was a young prodigy who became known as the most talented scholar of his time, which may explain his arrogance and his posthumous name, Jiao (Pride)*,* bestowed on him by his uncle, the emperor Wudi (r. 502–49). He was an advocate of 'innovative newness' (*xinbian*), as against those like Liu Xie who maintained that it was not innovation but renewal of the ancient values that led to creative change and transformation.[60] He was also especially knowledge-able about an arcane numerological system that was held to explain major historical events by calculating the 'numbers of the heavens' (*tianshu*), which may explain his interest in compiling historical works.[61] One of his efforts was to collate the texts of a number of histories of the Later Han to compile his own in 100 *juan.*

When he turned his attention to the history of the Qi there were already a number of works available. During the Qi, a history office had been set up in 480, and Tan Chao and Jiang Yan were charged with drawing up a state history. After the Liang replaced the Qi in 502, Wu Jun sought imperial sponsorship and access to the archives to compile one, but he was told that since that dynasty was so recent there was much information available elsewhere and he should search it out on his own. He thereupon wrote a *Qi chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals of the Qi] in 30 *juan.* The emperor at the time took exception to a reference to him and had the submitted copy burned. Wu, however, had his personal copy, and that, or a version of it, survived into the Song dynasty. There were many others about. Liu Zhi compiled a *Qiji* [Record of the Qi] in 10 *juan*; Shen Yue another *Qiji* in 20 *juan*; and Jiang Yan a *Qishi* [History of the Qi] in 13 *juan*. All of these were already lost by early Tang.[62]

It would appear from his biography in the standard histories that Xiao compiled the *Nan Qishu* before he held any office, and it may be that the emperor put off Wu Jun to reserve that task for Xiao. Certainly his connection with the royal family would have given him access to the resources of the imperial library without an official position. When it was completed he presented his manuscript to the throne, and it was ordered to be housed in the imperial library.[63]

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[60] Wen Fong, 'Why Chinese Painting is History', *The Art Bulletin*, 85 (2003), 263.
[61] Ho Peng Yoke, *Chinese Mathematical Astrology: Reaching out for the Stars* (London, 2003), 39–68.
[62] Du, *Zhongguo shixueshi*, 141.
[63] *Liangshu* 35.511. His biography reports that later, when the emperor Wu, Xiao Yan (r. 502–549) asked if he, the emperor, were to compile a general history (*tongshi*) all these histories could be disposed of, Xiao Zixian responded that it would resemble the disappearance of certain works due

In general, the *Nan Qishu* is considered reliable, but there are serious caveats, due primarily to Xiao's personal connections with the deposed dynasty and also to his being in the service of the one that replaced it. His biography of his father, Xiao Ni, runs to over 9,000 words—an unprecedented length. More seriously, the circumstances of the founding of the Qi dynasty, in which his grandfather had played a part, and those of the transition to the Liang were glossed over without the bloody details and the coercion involved being brought out. For such reasons, the *Nan Qishu* is not considered to be an 'excellent history' (*liangshi*). On the positive side, Xiao had a method of including in the biography of an individual mention of others who had similar attributes, thus furnishing information about some for whom it was not possible to provide an independent biography. This sort of group biography enabled him to preserve data while reducing the number of biographies and the overall length of the history.[64]

5. *Weishu* compiled by Wei Shou

The *Weishu* [History of the Wei] may be one of the most controversial of the standard histories.[65] When Wei Shou was ordered to compile the history of the Northern Wei/Eastern Wei there was already a large body of work to draw on. Originally a state history by Deng Yuan, the *Daiji* (Dai being the original name of the dynasty) in 10+ *juan*, covered the early years of the Wei. Cui Hao continued it to bring it to 30 *juan*. Finally, in the time of Emperor Wencheng (r. 452–65), it was extended by Gao Yun and Liu Mo. These segments all used the chronological style. In 487, Li Biao and Cui Guang compiled a history of the Wei using the *jizhuan* or composite style, dividing the material into annals, tables, monographs, and biographies. Other contributions were a court diary of Emperor Xiaowen (r. 471–499) by Xing Luan, which ended at 491, after which it was continued by Cui Hong and Wang Zunye down to 514 in a very detailed manner. Wen Zisheng compiled the *Zhuangdi ji* [Record of Emperor Zhuang] in 3 *juan*, for the years 528–530, and Yuan Huiye compiled the *Bian zongshi lu* [A Record Demarcating the Imperial Household], a genealogy in 30 *juan*.[66] There were

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to what Confucius had accomplished. At the time this was considered to be a famous reply. Apparently, as noted above, Emperor Wu did compile such a history, but it failed to replace the other histories.

[64] Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 308–13; and see also Du, *Zhongguo shixueshi*, 42 and the literature cited there.

[65] Jennifer Holmgren, 'Northern Wei as a Conquest Dynasty: Current Perceptions; Past Scholarship', *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 40 (1989), 1–50, is an excellent summary of the controversies related to the *Weishu*. On this subject, see also Zhou Yiliang, 'Wei Shou zhi shixue', *Yanjing xuebao*, 18 (1935), 107–46; reprinted in Zhou Yiliang, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi lunji* (Beijing, 1963), 236–72.

[66] James Ware, 'Notes on the history of the Wei-shu', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 52 (1932), 37–8; Wang, *Zhongguo shixueshi gangyao*, 81; and Eberhard, *Das Toba-Reich Nord Chinas*,

other materials ready at hand as well, since the transition from the Northern Wei (386–534) and Eastern Wei (534–550) to the Northern Qi in 550 was accomplished without loss to the archives.

Wei Shou's talent in composition was recognized early and, while still in his mid-twenties, he was assigned to record the court diary, and also took part in compiling the state history. He held prestigious appointments, and was often called on to compose special announcements, such as the documents announcing the abdication of the last Eastern Wei ruler and accession of the Northern Qi in 550. In 551 he received the command to compile the history of the Northern/Eastern Wei. Gao Longzhi was named to oversee the project, but his was a nominal appointment. The emperor is reported to have told Wei Shou, 'I appreciate a straight [honest] pen, I will never be like the Taiwu (emperor) of the (Northern) Wei (r. 424–51) who executed the history official'— a reference to the execution of Cui Hao in 450. Ostensibly Cui Hao was put to death, together with his family and many associates, because he was accused of insulting the Xianbei forbearers of the imperial family in the history he had written. With the aid of a number of other officials, whose names are given in Wei Shou's biography but who were said to have contributed little, the main body of the work was completed and presented to the throne in the third month of 554. The remainder was finished by the eleventh month. In all it consisted of 12 *juan* of annals, 92 *juan* of biographies, and 20 *juan* of monographs, making a total of 124 *juan* (though numbered as 114). In addition there were 35 editorial principles (*li*), 25 prefaces, 94 historian's comments (*lun*), two charts, and one statement (*qi*).[67] One of the innovations introduced by Wei Shou was a monograph on Buddhism and Daoism—the only one in the standard histories. Wei's childhood name, Fozhu or Buddha's Aide, may help explain its inclusion.

Criticisms were soon raised against the *Weishu*. Early on, Wei was accused of not being impartial and injecting personal biases into his treatment of the past. For example, to express gratitude to Yang Xiuzhi for having helped him previously, he glossed over the criminal record of Yang's father, and said that one Li Ping thought highly of the father, when in fact it had been Li Ping who had censured him. Another accusation was that he had taken bribes; Erzhu Rong had led a coup against the Northern Wei in 528 and had seized the capital at Luoyang which he held until he was assassinated in 530. In Wei's biography, in the history of the Northern Qi, it is said that he accepted a bribe from Erzhu Rong's son to whitewash the evil he had committed and to praise him instead. Another factor, mentioned in Wei's biography, is that the ruling house of the Northern Qi had emerged out of the followers of Erzhu.

ch. 13, 'Die Geschichtsschreiber', is an exhaustive study of those who held posts as historians during this period.

[67] *Bei Qishu* 37.488.

To respond to the claim that the *Weishu* was not a balanced work, the emperor called for a hearing at the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu sheng*) presided over by the emperor, at which Wei could answer his critics. More than a hundred complainants pressed their cases: some said there were errors in the official positions held by family members, or that their family was not even included, or that there was reckless slander. Wei did not do his case any good by losing his temper, but because the emperor valued his talents, even when he was shown to be in error, he did not impose any penalty on Wei. On the contrary, several of the complainants were flogged, and there were even some executed. Still there were complaints, and the *Weishu* came to be called the 'dirty' (*wei*) history. Family status depended upon the official positions achieved, so it was a matter of great concern that these be accurately recorded.[68] But in time a few revisions were made and the uproar died down. Further, some of the charges against him as listed in Wei Shou's biography have been shown to be questionable.[69]

The position of the *Weishu* as the accepted history was again disputed in the Sui dynasty (581–618). The Northern Qi traced its line of legitimacy from the Northern Wei through the Eastern Wei, and since Wei Shou was writing in the Northern Qi, he followed that line. The Sui, however, tracked its legitimacy through the Western Wei and the Northern Zhou. This led to a new compilation of a *Weishu*, in this case under the leadership of Wei Dan, a distant cousin of Wei Shou. All that remains of this work are some principles on which he differed from Wei Shou and which are included in Wei Dan's biography in *Suishu*. Possibly Song editors drew on Wei Dan's *Weishu* to supply a missing *juan* 3 of Wei Shou's *Weishu*.[70]

In Wei Shou's favour, the *Weishu* is a solid piece of scholarship. He had a wide range of materials with which to work, and despite some mistakes he made use of family genealogies to incorporate their rich material.[71] There is a wealth of information contained in the monographs, as there is in his accounts of the foreign countries. As one writer sums it up, it was too bad that his behaviour brought him the reputation of a dirty name.[72]

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[68] Albert Dien, 'Elite Lineages and the T'o-pa Accommodation: A Study of the Edict of 495', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 19 (1975), 61–88.

[69] Du, *Zhongguo shixueshi*, 143–7.

[70] Albert Dien, 'Wei Tan and the Historiography of the *Wei shu*', in Paul W. Kroll and David R. Knechtges (eds.), *Studies in Early Medieval Chinese Literature and Cultural History, in Honor of Donald Holzman and Richard B. Mather* (Provo, Utah, 2003), 399–468.

[71] This information was largely the basis on which Eberhard studied the gentry families of the period in *Das Toba-Reich Nord Chinas*. As for Wei's temperament, it is worth noting that Yan Zhitui (531–591+), a contemporary of Wei's who had also been an official in the Northern Qi, and who held himself and others to a high standard of conduct, said that Wei was greatly admired in his time and served as a model for others, but Yan does mention that on two separate occasions Wei lost his temper: Teng Ssu-yü, *Family Instructions for the Yen Clan by Yen Chih-t'ui* (Leiden, 1968), 65 and 97.

[72] Du, *Zhongguo shixueshi*, 147.

SUMMARY

Some sense of the value placed in general on historical writings at the time comes out in a passage in the *Luoyang qielanji* [Record of the Monasteries of Luoyang] of AD 530. A recluse who claimed to be centuries old and thus knowledgeable about the distant past asserted that historical records were distorted. He said that men of ordinary talent were lauded after death, that rulers were compared to the sage kings, and officials to famous ministers of antiquity. 'One might say that a brigand when alive becomes a sage after death. Such flattery harms the right, and this flowery language destroys the truth.'[73]

The *Wenxin diaolong* [The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons] by Liu Xie, one of the pre-eminent works of literary criticism in China, has a chapter on historical writings. Since it was written during the Six Dynasties period, it is especially of interest here to observe what Liu Xie had to say about historiography of his period.[74] To some extent Liu agrees with the hoary recluse just cited:

If the subject is from a family of great prestige and honour, he tends to be eloquently adorned, even though he may be a mediocrity. But should the subject be a frustrated scholar, all his virtue will not save him from ridicule....To be able to give a rational account of a matter and keep rigidly to what is true, one has to have an unbiased mind.[75]

Liu also deplores errors and exaggerations in writing about the past—how historians magnify what they know of their own time and describe in detail the past of which they may not have accurate information, bragging that 'in my book is recorded what cannot be found in earlier histories'.[76] Rather, Liu urges historians to base themselves on the classics, and to follow the example of Confucius in providing didactic texts that encourage the good and give warnings to the evil doers.[77] Liu praises those works that are comprehensive and sound in the collection of material. The prose in the *Sanguozhi* by Chen Shou, in his opinion, had substance and was judicious and penetrating (*wenzhi bianxia*), and for that reason was compared with the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*.[78] Much of Liu's comments are

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[73] *Memories of Loyang: Yang Hsüan-chih and the Lost Capital (493–534)*, trans. W. J. F. Jenner (Oxford, 1981), 183–4. For a more literal translation, see *Monasteries in Lo-yang, by Yang Hsüan-chih*, trans. Yi-t'ung Wang (Princeton, 1984), 80–1.

[74] There are two English translations of the *Wenxian diaolong*: Vincent Yu-chung Shih, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons: A Study of Thought and Pattern in Chinese Literature* (Hong Kong, 1983); and Siu-kit Wong, Allan Chung-hang Lo, and Kwong-tai Lam, *The Book of Literary Design* (Hong Kong, 1999). The section under consideration here is chapter 16 of the *Wenxin diaolong*. The translations offered here were made in consultation with the above works, but are my own.

[75] Shih, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, 182–3.   [76] Ibid., 181.

[77] Ibid., 179.   [78] Ibid., 175.

impressionistic and difficult to pin down, but his emphasis on accuracy, frankness, and reliability is clear: his intention is to encourage the historian to live up to the tradition that went back to Confucius and the classics. There is here a parallel, perhaps, with the medieval chronicler in Europe, of whom it is said: 'He belongs to an ancient and rich historiographical tradition that included the best works of both Christian and classical history. This tradition directed his inquiry into specific paths, modelled his views and interpretive strategies, and provided a language of historical discourse through which he might impart his findings. It gave him, in short, the tools of his craft.'[79]

As we have seen, the writing of history during the Six Dynasties period was greatly expanded in scope and types of material. There was a marked development of the historical offices responsible for the recording and archiving of many sorts of material, and for the regularization of the compilation of a variety of interim redactions. Private compilations of a wide variety of local and historiographical nature emerged, characterized by a high degree of vitality and innovation, to test the parameters set by tradition. These accomplishments thus marked an important phase in the maturation of historiography as an independent pursuit. There was also the emergence of a critical apparatus, seen in the historians' remarks appended to certain chapters in their histories, and more especially in essays termed *shiping*, or 'critical historical comments', allowing the historian to step back, as it were, to give him a voice, so as to analyze the course of events. As can be seen from Liu Xie's remarks, while the amount and varieties of historical writing may have been impressive, the quality was not always the best. Qiu Min observes that this is a problem often met in any developmental phase.[80] Still, what was accomplished during the Six Dynasties period provided a solid base for the professionalization of the historiographical enterprise in the Tang which followed.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

202 BC–AD 8	Western (Former) Han Dynasty
AD 9–23	Wang Mang Interregnum
AD 26–220	Eastern (Later) Han
220–581	Six Dynasties Period (a time when China was divided into many overlapping regimes)

Three Kingdoms 220–280:

Wei 220–265
Han 221–263
Wu 222–280

[79] Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'Political Utility in Medieval Historiography: A Sketch', *History and Theory*, 14:3 (1975), 315.
[80] Qiu, *Liuchao shixue*, 368–9.

KEY HISTORICAL SOURCES

Chen Shou, *Sanguozhi* (297).
Fan Ye, *Hou Hanshu* (445).
Liu Xie, *Wenxin diaolong* (c.500).
Shen Yue, *Songshu* (493).
Wei Shou, *Weishu* (554).
Xiao Zixian, *Nan Qishu* (537).

Liu Xie's book has been translated by Vincent Yu-chung Shih as *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons: A Study of Thought and Pattern in Chinese Literature* (Hong Kong, 1983). The other works can be consulted in the Zhonghua shuju punctuated, collated edition of the *Ershisishi* (Beijing, 1962–75).

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Chapter 22

Buddhism: Biographies of Buddhist Monks

John Kieschnick

Buddhist historiography in East Asia eventually came to encompass a variety of formats, including histories of individual monasteries, collections of documents relating to court debates, the history of Buddhist figures and institutions in particular regions, and chronologies of events. But the predominant form of Buddhist historiography in East Asia has always been biography, and in particular, biographies of monks. We find nothing quite like the figure of the Buddhist monk in Chinese historiography before the appearance of Buddhism. The recluse was established as a stock figure of Chinese biography, but the monk, with shaven head, patched robe, vows of lifelong celibacy, and devotion to foreign scriptures, was something new. The Chinese biographical format, however, soon proved flexible enough to accommodate distinctively Buddhist concerns.

Accounts of Buddhist figures, including leading monks and buddhas—whether the last Buddha Śākyamuni or buddhas that preceded him—are scattered throughout early Buddhist literature in sutras, the monastic regulations, and other types of writing.[1] The dating of Indian Buddhist literature is notoriously difficult, but we can at least say that by the end of the period covered in this volume (AD 600), hagiographical accounts of Indian monks and other Buddhist figures were well known not only in India and Ceylon, but also, through Chinese translation, in East Asia.[2] Nevertheless, biography was not a discrete genre of Indian Buddhist writings, and in format, biographies of monks in China owe more to pre-Buddhist Chinese convention than they do to biography in India.

In the latter part of the first century, Buddhist monks for the first time entered the Chinese historical record with a few chance references in court documents

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[1] Reginald A. Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India: A Study in Buddhist Values and Orientation* (New York, 1994); and John Strong, *The Legend and Cult of Upagupta: Sanskrit Buddhism in North India and Southeast Asia* (Princeton, 1992). On the life of the Buddha, see Edward J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and Histo*ry (6th edn, London, 1960).

[2] English translations by Li Rongxi and Albert A. Dalia of three such accounts—biographies of Aśvaghoṣa, Nāgārguna, and Vasubandhu—are conveniently collected in *Lives of Great Monks and Nuns* (Berkeley, 2002).

and miscellaneous writing. But it is only from a hundred years after this that we have records of the first *named* monk in Chinese documents: An Shigao, a Parthian missionary and translator. Even at this time, monks remained an isolated group of only minor political and social significance for Chinese society in general, and so were rarely even mentioned in the major historical records of the time. From the second century on, however, the monastic community gradually grew in China, eventually including Han Chinese as well as foreign monks. By AD 600, Buddhist monasticism was a major economic and cultural force in China, commonly discussed in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist historical sources.[3]

By the time Buddhism entered China, the custom of writing biographies for important figures was well established, with commonly accepted conventions of style, content, and standards of selection. Given the Chinese enthusiasm for the biographical format, it is not surprising that from early on in the history of Chinese Buddhism, various types of accounts of monks were composed and circulated. After some experimentation with format, the appearance of the *Gaoseng zhuan* [Biographies of Eminent Monks] in the sixth century established a standard style and format for biographies of monks for the rest of the medieval period and beyond. Beyond format, the *Gaoseng zhuan* also discloses conventions of how monastic historians interpreted their sources, their motivations for writing biographies of monks, and how they employed Buddhist doctrines to interpret the past. Enough survives of biographies from before the *Gaoseng zhuan* for us to observe the emergence of these conventions at the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth century. Owing relatively little to Indian biography and a great deal to its immediate Buddhist predecessors, the *Gaoseng zhuan* eventually had a profound impact on Buddhist biography, not only in China, but also in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.

BEFORE HUIJIAO'S *GAOSENG ZHUAN*

The impetus to compile a collection of biographies of monks was no doubt inspired in part by the popularity of collections of biographies of various types of figures in China during the early medieval period.[4] For the subject of his own collection, by the early 500s, when the *Gaoseng zhuan* was compiled, its author, Huijiao, could draw on an extensive literature recording the lives of monks from the beginnings of Buddhism in China to his own day.[5] Most of this literature is

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[3] The best survey of Buddhism for this period remains Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (1959; rpr. Leiden, 1972).

[4] On these collections of 'assorted biographies' (*za zhuan*), see Qiu Min, *Liuchao shixue* (Nanjing, 2003), 158–78; and Hu Baoguo, *Han Tang jian shixue de fazhan* (Beijing, 2003), 132–58.

[5] Arthur F. Wright's, 'Biography and Hagiography: Hui Chiao's "Lives of Eminent Monks"', in *Silver Jubilee Volume of the Zinbun Kagaku kenkyusyo* (Kyoto, 1954), remains the best study of this work. It is reprinted in Wright's *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Robert M. Somers (New Haven, 1990), 73–111, 150–72.

lost to us. Below I will discuss the only work Huijiao drew on that is extant in complete form: the *Chu sanzang jiji* [Collection of Records on the Translation of Works from the Three Repositories], which was compiled just a few decades before Huijiao's work. I will also examine an important source for the *Gaoseng zhuan*: the *Mingseng zhuan* [Biographies of Famous Monks], which again dates to shortly before the *Gaoseng zhuan*, and for which some fragments survive. But the *Gaoseng zhuan* itself also allows us to reconstruct something of the Buddhist biographical tradition that came before the emergence of these influential works at the beginning of the sixth century.

On seven occasions in the *Gaoseng zhuan*, Huijiao refers to the erection of steles (*bei*) upon the death of a prominent monk, with inscriptions detailing the events of the monk's life. The earliest of these references is to an inscription in honour of the great exegete Huiyuan, composed by the eminent literatus Xie Lingyun.[6] Such inscriptions were, from early on, a key genre of biographical writing, and remained so throughout Chinese Buddhist history. Although the inscriptions mentioned in the *Gaoseng zhuan* are not extant, we can assess their basic style and content from the biographies that drew upon them and from what we know of such inscriptions from later periods. Such inscriptions are normally extremely ornate—more paeans to the virtues of the monk in question than detailed accounts of the events in his life—but they usually also give key facts about the monk, including his family background and date of death. With the premium such works place on style and dense allusion to both Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature, it is not surprising that many of the authors of the inscriptions were literati. In addition to Xie Lingyun, Huijiao mentions a stele inscription composed by the prominent official Zhou Yong and another by Liu Xie. All three of these figures—Xie Lingyun, Zhou Yong, and Liu Xie—were known in their day as devout Buddhist laymen, in addition to their reputations as men of letters. At times, Huijiao notes that a stele was erected by the disciples of the monk in question. Steles were usually placed beside the deceased monk's tomb, a stupa containing his remains, or near his monastery.[7] Such biographies, then, were originally rooted to a place, and contributed to the reputation of the monastery, stupa, and disciples with which they were associated. This local function was largely lost when these inscriptions were incorporated into biographical collections circulated as books.

In addition to inscriptions, Huijiao often refers to independent biographies of particular monks, circulated as manuscripts. His account of An Shigao, for

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[6] *Gaozeng zhuan* 6, T 2059, vol. 50, p. 361b. I refer here to the Taisho edition. For another useful modern edition, see the edition edited by Tang Yongtong (Beijing, 1992). In fact, in this instance, Huijiao probably drew on the slightly earlier *Chu sanzang jiji* which cites the inscription by Xie Lingyun (*Chu sanzang jiji* 15, T 2145, p. 110c.).

[7] On Chinese steles, see Dorothy C. Wong, *Chinese Steles: Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Use of a Symbolic Form* (Honolulu, 2004).

instance, refers to a separate biography (*biezhuan*).[8] In most of the instances in which Huijiao cites 'separate biographies' for monks, he then relates a miraculous event—An Shigao makes a prophecy, and in the case of another monk, one Yu Falan, the monk brings water out of a dry spring.[9] This suggests that, unlike the inscriptions, which usually focus on exalting the erudition and virtue of their subject, these separately circulating accounts focused on miraculous events associated with monks, not necessarily famous for their institutional contributions. In the fourth century, and perhaps earlier, monks and laymen began to draw on these two sources—inscriptions and manuscript biographies of individual monks—to compile *collections* of biographies of monks.[10] In these collections, the two major types of source were further supplemented by reference to writings by the monks in question—in particular, prefaces to their works—and at times by reference to oral accounts.

In the preface to his *Gaoseng zhuan*, Huijiao lists eighteen collections of biographies of monks which he then briefly evaluates. Most of these collections are no longer extant, though some survive in fragments quoted in later works. The earliest of the texts mentioned that we can date are from the latter part of the fourth century.[11] But the majority come from the late fifth century. Judging by the names, six of these collections were compiled by monks, and twelve by laymen. Of particular note is that—again judging by the titles of the works and surviving fragments—while the collections compiled by monks include works dedicated to monks engaged in scholarly pursuits (translation, exegesis) and pilgrimage, the works compiled by laymen are generally focused on miracles. The same tendency was true in the later history of monastic biography: although monks were certainly interested in thaumaturgy in addition to scholarship, lay biographers expressed less interest in exegetes and translators than they did in wonderworkers.

Exegetes and translators are precisely the focus of the most influential extant early collection of biographies, the *Chu sanzang jiji*.[12] Compiled by the prominent monk and prolific author Sengyou, the *Chu sanzang jiji* is not primarily a collection of biographies; it is instead a catalogue of scriptures. Sengyou was one of the most accomplished monks of his day, with close connections to the court

    [8] *Gaoseng zhuan*, 324b.
    [9] Ibid., 349c. In addition to the two references to *biezhuan*, there are three references to *bieji* 'separate records'.
    [10] For a study of the use of inscriptions (and miracle tales, discussed below), see Koichi Shinohara, 'Two Sources of Chinese Buddhist Biographies: Stupa Inscriptions and Miracle Stories', in Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (eds.), *Monks and Magicians: Religious Biographies in Asia* (Oakville, Ont., 1988), 119–229.
    [11] *Biographies of Lofty Sramanas* (*Gaoyi shamen zhuan*) by one Faji which, according to a later catalogue, was written during the reign of Emperor Xiaowu of the Jin (373–96), and the *Biographies of Monks from the Eastern Mountain* (*Dongshan sengzhuan)* by Xi Chao (336–77).
    [12] T 2145, vol. 55. For a useful modern edition, see *Chu sanzang jiji*, ed. Su Jinren and Xiao Lianzi (Beijing, 1995).

of Emperor Wu of the Liang. In addition to the *Chu sanzang jiji*, he is also known for an invaluable collection of court documents related to Buddhism: the *Hongmingji* [Collection (of works) that Spread the Light].[13] Sengyou compiled at least one other biographical work: a collection of biographies of more than ninety monks who transmitted the monastic tradition of the Sarvāstivāda school. Unfortunately, only the preface to this work survives.[14]

Like the *Gaoseng zhuan*, the *Chu sanzang jiji* draws on earlier works—in particular a catalogue by the fourth-century monk Daoan—that are no longer extant or survive only in fragments. Most of the research on this text to date has focused on its importance as a record of translations in circulation in the sixth century.[15]

In addition to the catalogue, the *Chu sanzang jiji* also includes related documents. The text consists of five sections: 1) materials on the formation of the Buddhist canon; 2) a catalogue of Chinese Buddhist works, including but not limited to translation; 3) prefaces to Buddhist scriptures, including works by some of the most influential exegetes in Chinese Buddhist history; 4) miscellaneous records, including letters and brief disquisitions; and finally, 5) biographies. There are in total thirty-two biographies. Most are for monks known to have translated Buddhist scriptures, but a few are devoted to exegetes not directly involved in translations.

Sengyou probably drew on the same sorts of sources mentioned above, though he rarely notes his sources.[16] He no doubt also made use of biographical information in prefaces to scriptures—texts normally written by prominent monks, but at times by laymen, that often include brief biographical information on the monks who translated or composed the scripture.

In the preface to the *Chu sanzang jiji*, Sengyou provides us with our first statement of historiographical principles when compiling monastic biographies—though his comments apply to his catalogue and collection of prefaces as well. Sengyou writes:

When biographical accounts are narrated, the reputation of the men in question can be observed. I have analyzed the Buddhist scriptures and researched non-Buddhist writings. These I have consulted with the help of past experience and verified with older information. If someone has evidence then I use it as a guide; if hearsay is incomplete

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[13] In addition to the *Hongmingji* (T 2102, vol. 52) and the *Chu sanzang jiji*, the only other work of Sengyou's to survive is his study of the Buddha's family, the *Shijiapu* (T 2040, vol. 50). On Sengyou, see Arthur E. Link, 'Shih Seng-yu and His Writings', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 80:1 (1960), 17–43.

[14] The work in question is the *Sapoduobu shizi ji*. The preface can be found in *Chu sanzang jiji* 12, p. 89a.

[15] See, for instance, Naito Ryuo, 'Shutsu sanzō kishū no mokuroku-gakuteki kosatsu', *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū*, 18:2 (1970), 808–11; and Sugiyama Ryusho, 'Shutsu sanzō kishū shitsuyaku zatsukyōroku o megutte', *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū*, 42:2 (1994), 46–8.

[16] The *Chu sanzang jiji* contains one reference to a stele (p. 110c) and one reference to a 'separate biography' (*biezhuan*) (p. 49b). In fact, Sengyou compiled a collection of Buddhist inscriptions, the *Faji zajiming*, but only the table of contents and preface survive. *Chu sanzang jiji* 12, p. 94c.

then I classify it as dubious. When I take tablet in hand and steady my brush, my ambition is to produce reliable history. I consider (the evidence) over and again, devoting myself to selecting accurate records. For if facts that are supported by evidence are displayed, those without foundation will expose themselves. May the ditch water not mix with the purest milk, nor the fool's jade of Mount Yan[17] be taken for the true jade of Mount Jing.

Yet, I see as if from a well, as if through a tube, and it is my shame that I am (not more) erudite and accomplished. Where my work is imperfect, this I leave for the perspicacious and wise (to correct).[18]

As we will see below, it was in their commitment to producing 'reliable history' through careful examination of the historical record that monastic historians like Sengyou sought to distinguish themselves from mere collectors of curious tales.

Baochang, a disciple of Sengyou, is credited with carrying on his master's tradition through the compilation of two major biographical collections: the *Mingseng zhuan* [Biographies of Famous Monks] and the *Biqiuni zhuan* [Biographies of Nuns]. The *Mingseng zhuan* is not extant, but the table of contents and some fragments have been preserved in a partial copy made by a thirteenth-century Japanese monk who copied out sections of the original work relating to Maitreya. The *Biqiuni zhuan*, containing accounts of sixty-five nuns, survives. Since the eighth century, Baochang has been credited with compiling the *Biqiuni zhuan,* but since no reference is made to the text in earlier bibliographies or in the seventh-century biography of Baochang, it is possible that he did not in fact compile the text.[19] Nonetheless, regardless of the author, the text seems to have been composed in roughly the early sixth century. The sources employed to compile these works are similar to those we have already seen. That is, they drew on independently circulating biographies, collections of biographies, and inscriptions.[20] This is explicit in the preface to the *Biqiuni zhuan* where the author states: 'for a long time, I have been examining epitaphs and eulogies and searching in collections of writings. Sometimes I inquired among the well informed; sometimes I interviewed the aged. Putting this material in order from beginning to end, I compiled the biographies of nuns.'[21]

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[17] Here I follow Su Jinren and Xiao Lianzi (*Chu sanzang jiji*, 18 n. 12) in reading Yan 燕 for Chu 楚.

[18] *Chu sanzang jiji*, 1b. Cf. Link, 'Shih Seng-you and His Writings', 34–40, where the preface is translated in full with annotation. Sengyou expresses similar sentiments in the preface to his now-lost collection of biographies of monks in the Sarvāstivāda tradition. *Chu sanzang jiji* 12, p. 89a.

[19] Tom De Rauw, 'Baochang: Sixth-Century Biographer of Buddhist Monks...and Nuns?' *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 125:2 (2005), 203–18.

[20] These are gleaned from Su Jinren, 'Mingseng zhuan ji Mingseng zhuan chao', *Xiandai foxue*, (1963/4), 34.

[21] *Biqiuni zhuan*, T 2063, vol. 50, p. 934b; the translation is from Kathryn Ann Tsai, *Lives of the Nuns: Biographies of Chinese Buddhist Nuns from the Fourth to Sixth Centuries* (Honolulu, 1994), 16. For a convenient modern edition of the text, see Wang Rutong, *Biqiunizhuan jiaozhu* (Beijing, 2006).

The most innovative aspect of the *Biqiuni zhuan* is its subject matter: we have no other record of a collection of biographies of nuns before this time. The greatest contribution of the *Mingseng zhuan* is its structure. Baochang was the first to develop a system for categorizing different types of monks along the lines used in collections of biographies by court historians. That being said, the system he devised is clumsy. He divided the biographies into seven basic categories: 1) Dharma masters; 2) Vinaya Masters; 3) Meditation Masters; 4) Thaumaturges (*shenli*); 5) Ascetics (*kujie*); 6) Preachers; and 7) Masters of Recitation. But the section on Dharma masters is further divided into five sub-sections that often appear to overlap (foreign Dharma masters; foreign Dharma masters with divine powers who spread the teaching; Chinese Dharma masters of lofty conduct; reclusive Chinese Dharma masters; and Chinese Dharma masters). Similarly, the category of 'ascetics' is divided into seven sub-sections (ascetics who were also scholars; ascetics involved in miracles; ascetics who sacrificed their bodies; those who devoted themselves towards the search for suffering;[22] ascetics who sought the Dharma and translated scriptures; ascetics who copied scriptures and made images; and ascetics who built stupas and monasteries). Although this unwieldy system was not adopted by later biographers, it established the practice of dividing biographies into categories. Similarly, Baochang was the first to provide a discursive disquisition on the subject of each of his categories.[23] In this as well, Baochang was patterning his history on that of previous non-Buddhist court historians.

Baochang was the first to make the case that Buddhist biographies can serve as exempla—models of behaviour. As stated in the preface to the *Biqiuni zhuan*,

Figures such as these came one after another, deep oceans and lofty peaks, like the sound of gold or the tingling of jade. Truly they are pillars of support in a degenerate era, the 'four reliances'[24] in the final age. With the passage of time, as the monastic regulations fall away, their noble tradition will serve as a model for a thousand years. Yet their accomplishments are not collected in a book, and for many years this has caused me to sigh with regret.[25]

Hence, none of the biographies of nuns relates stories of corrupt or improper nuns. And, with a few rare exceptions, the same is true for other collections of monastic biography compiled by monks.

Finally, at certain points in his works, the historian intervenes in the narrative to adjudicate between divergent sources. This was to become a standard practice of monastic historians and a way of demonstrating their historiographical skill

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[22] *Zongsuo kujie* 宗索苦節. The meaning of the term is obscure. See Su, 'Mingseng zhuan ji Mingseng zhuan chao', 35.

[23] Only his disquisition (*lun*) on the Vinaya survives.

[24] *Siyi* 四依, a technical Buddhist term (Skt. catvāri pratisaraṇāni). There are various sets of four.

[25] *Biqiuni zhuan*, 934b; and cf. Tsai, *Lives of the Nuns*, 16.

and allegiance to the same 'reliable history' that Sengyou championed in his preface. In his biography of the nun Huiguo, for instance, the compiler interrupts his account of how an official donated a plot of land to build a monastery for the nun in 422, noting that the monk 'Tanzong says that this was in the seventh year of the Yuanjia era (430), but the Abbess of the monastery, the nun Hongan, allowed me to see the land deed. It was in fact in the third year of the Yongchu era (422).'[26] Tanzong was the author of a collection of records on monasteries in the capital, no longer extant, that must have been the author's source.[27] But what is interesting here is not so much the source as the fact that the historian felt it necessary, not only to attempt to verify the date in his source, but also to explain to the reader what he had done to prove it incorrect. There are several such asides in the *Biqiuni zhuan*, mostly about place names and dates.[28] Of particular note is that the compiler was willing to interrupt the narrative on points that are usually not particularly important for understanding the gist of the biography. Narrative flow gives way to technical precision; action is halted when the historian sees the opportunity to display his scholarly skill.

The legacy of Baochang's works is found chiefly in his influence on the *Gaoseng zhuan*, which eclipsed his own work in popularity and reputation. Before modern times, no further collections of biographies of nuns were compiled, and subsequent writers, from the sixth century to the seventh, criticized the *Mingseng zhuan* for its prolix style and imprecise categorization of monks.[29] It was apparently largely for this reason that the *Mingseng zhuan* fell into obscurity, leaving us with only one chance collection of fragments.

HUIJIAO'S *GAOSENG ZHUAN*

The majority of Buddhist biographies in Chinese from before the sixth century are lost to us, and we know of their existence only through titles of works listed in bibliographies and from fragments cited in later works. One reason for the loss of earlier works is that they were overshadowed by Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan* which, for many readers, surpassed previous works in scope and quality. This was certainly Huijiao's intention. A substantial part of his preface is taken up with pointing out the shortcomings of previous collections of biographies of monks. His criticisms focus on style, criteria for inclusion, and organization. He notes, for instance, that while the *Sengshi* [History of Monks] by Wang Jin attempted to be more comprehensive than others, 'the literary form is inadequate'.[30] He is more explicit about at least part of what constitutes good

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[26] *Biqiuni zhuan* 2, p. 937b.   [27] The *Jingshi tasiji*; see *Gaoseng zhuan* 13, p. 416b.
[28] *Biqiuni zhuan* 1 p. 935c; 2, p. 939b; 3, p. 943c; 3, p. 944b.
[29] See Kiriya Seiichi, 'Myōsōden no seiritsu to sono shūhen', *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū*, 22:2 (1974), 296–300.
[30] Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, 91.

style later in the preface, where he complains of prolix authors who 'profitlessly set down a plethora of meaningless words', while at the same time castigating others who 'out of an aversion to multiplicity and breadth, abridge their data' or who mention monks only in passing as subsidiary characters in narratives about others.[31] In other words, the key to good biographical style was to be at once comprehensive and succinct.

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

Huijiao also expressed dissatisfaction with the limited scope in the organization of other collections of biographies of monks that focused only on recluses, ascetics, or pilgrims, or on a particular region, or works that mixed biographies of monks together with accounts of non-monastics, or together with expositions of Buddhist doctrine. What was needed was a comprehensive collection of biographies that would represent the best of the sangha in all of its variety. The criteria for what was 'the best' of the sangha was another area in which Huijiao disapproved of his predecessors. In what is the most famous part of his preface, Huijiao explains his principles of inclusion and the title of the *Gaoseng zhuan* [Biographies of Eminent Monks] while criticizing the criteria used in Baochang's *Mingseng zhuan* [Biographies of Famous Monks], though he never mentions the book by name:

I have called my work the (*Biographies*) *of Eminent Monks.* Compilations from earlier times have mostly spoken of 'famous monks'. But fame (or name) is basically the guest of reality. If men of real achievement conceal their brilliance, then they are eminent but not famous; when men of slight virtue happen to be in accord with their times, then they are famous but not eminent. Those who are famous but not eminent are, of course, not recorded here; those who are eminent but not famous have been fully treated in the present work. For these reasons I have avoided the word *famous* and used instead the word *eminent*.[32]

In other words, writing as a leading monk, Huijiao was an unabashed champion for Buddhist monasticism. He was not interested in presenting a balanced assessment of the state of Buddhist monasticism over its first 400 years in China; he devotes no biographies to degenerate monks, nor to monks who were incapable of maintaining the monastic regulations. As in the case of the author of the *Biqiuni zhuan*, Huijiao presents his work as a collection of exemplars—models of behaviour for future monks—and as evidence for officials and laymen of the potential of Buddhist monasticism for perfection. In fact, when we compare the extant table of contents of the *Mingseng zhuan* with that of the *Gaoseng zhuan*, there is significant overlap, and the principles Huijiao outlines for inclusion in his work are basically the same as those employed for the *Biqiuni zhuan*.

[31] Ibid., 92.   [32] Ibid., 94–5.

One can draw a sharper contrast with collections of miracle tales, usually compiled by lay people. In these accounts, the focus was on entertaining tales of marvellous occurrences ('miracles') associated with monks in which the emphasis was on the miracles rather than the conduct of the monk himself. The conflict between these criteria and Huijiao's own criteria, coupled with his practice of incorporating previous accounts virtually unchanged into the *Gaoseng zhuan*, at times leads Huijiao to present material that seems to contradict his claim to present only 'eminent' monks worthy of emulation. The closest we get to accounts of immoral monks in the *Gaoseng zhuan* are several stories of monks who ate meat and drank ale. The most famous of these accounts is the biography of Beidu who, Huijiao tells us on more than one occasion, ate meat and fish and drank ale.[33] Vegetarianism had only recently become a requirement for Chinese monks, but alcohol was clearly prohibited by the monastic regulations.[34] Moreover, the fact that the biography specifically points out that Beidu—and several other monks in the collection—ate meat, suggests that this was not the norm; and that seems to have been the point in these biographies: they are accounts of monks with supernormal powers who are not easily classified according to the moral standards developed for ordinary monks. I have argued elsewhere that the inclusion of such monks in the *Gaoseng zhuan* was intended to explain away aberrant behaviour as the unfathomable acts of superior men not bound by conventional mores.[35] But the main reason for including such figures in collections of biographies of monks was probably the reliance of monastic historians on works by secular figures more interested in marvellous, entertaining accounts of holy men than in the propagation of exemplars for the clergy.

STRUCTURE

Rather than organize the biographies chronologically, as in the *Biqiuni zhuan*, Huijiao instead followed Baochang's *Mingseng zhuan*, dividing the biographies into categories, but replacing Baochang's unwieldy system with one that eventually proved more durable. Huijiao established ten categories of biography: 1) Translation, devoted to monks—mostly foreign, but some Chinese—who translated Buddhist scriptures into Chinese; 2) Exegesis, for monks known primarily for their commentaries on Buddhist scripture; 3) Thaumaturgy, for monks known for healing powers, use of spells, and contact with the spirit world; 4) Meditation; 5) Elucidation of the Monastic Regulations; 6) Self-immolation; 7) Recitation of Scripture; 8) Works of Merit; 9) Hymnody; and 10) Proselytism.

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[33] I give a fuller account of these stories in John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu, 1997), 51–63.

[34] John Kieschnick, 'A History of Buddhist Vegetarianism in China', in Roel Sterckx (ed.), *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics and Religion in Traditional China* (New York, 2005), 186–212.

[35] Kieschnick, *Eminent Monk*, 58–62.

Huijiao distributed 257 biographies into these categories, but also included 259 shorter subordinate biographies attached to the main biographies. This was Huijiao's innovation, and was continued by subsequent biographers. Baochang began the practice of concluding a section of biographies with a 'disquisition' (*lun*) discussing the category in general, but only a fragment of one of these survives, and Baochang's categories were too vague to lend themselves to sustained exegesis. Huijiao's disquisitions for each of his ten sections, on the other hand, are among the most successful parts of his work. Each disquisition begins by characterizing the subject of the category, in ornate language, with reference to Buddhist scripture and the Chinese classics. The disquisition on self-immolation, for instance, refers to examples of the denial of physical comfort in the Confucian *Analects* and in the *Mencius.* This is followed by a summary of the actions of the monks in the chapter. The disquisition concludes with a discussion of problems particular to the chapter. The disquisition for the chapter on self-immolation here provides a defence of Buddhist asceticism from Confucian claims that it is not filial (since we are charged with protecting the bodies bequeathed to us by our parents), and also discusses the more Buddhist objection that by burning one's body when one is still alive, one unnecessarily harms the thousands of tiny creatures that live inside our bodies. Similarly, the disquisition on translation treats the problem of finding balance between accuracy and good style. In addition, each chapter concludes with a 'eulogy' (*zan*) that attempts to encapsulate the spirit of the chapter in a short verse.

In addition to the precedents in Baochang's works, Huijiao followed earlier non-Buddhist historical works in his decision to compose eulogies and disquisitions. Sima Qian introduced commentary in his history with the words 'The Lord Grand Scribe Says', while Ban Gu termed his comments 'eulogies' in the *Hanshu* [History of the Han]. More directly, Fan Ye, in his *Hou Hanshu* [History of the Later Han], added both eulogies and disquisitions. Although Huijiao does not state so clearly, it is likely that in addition to Baochang it was Fan Ye who inspired him to consider these sorts of comments a necessary part of his collection of biographies.[36]

ADJUDICATION OF CONFLICTING SOURCES

As noted above, Huijiao drew on different types of sources, including miracle tales, inscriptions, prefaces, and oral accounts, each with different objectives and styles. Yet in general, Huijiao, along with the monastic historians who followed, was not preoccupied with these differences. And while he recognized discrepancies between different accounts, he did not in general specifically mark them as

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[36] On the use of eulogies and disquisitions in works previous to the *Gaoseng zhuan*, see Steven W. Durrant in this volume.

such in his written work—often making it very difficult to trace the origin of the stories he tells with any precision, and forcing us to speculate that, for example, the stories of monks who openly drank alcohol may have originated in miracle tales circulated by literati. Similarly, at times it is possible to speculate, on the basis of style, that one part of a biography draws on a stele inscription, while another draws on a miracle tale. When the sources do not clearly contradict each other, the Buddhist biographer, like the compiler of dynastic histories, was content to patch together the sources into a single biography, without attribution. On rare occasions, however, when the conflict between sources is especially apparent, or when a particular source seemed especially dubious, Huijiao deemed it necessary to step out from behind his sources and pass judgement.

One way of indicating reservations about one of his sources was to preface it with the phrase 'some say' (*huoyun*). Huijiao writes, in the case of Dharmaruci, that he 'wandered to various parts, and the circumstances of his death are unknown. *Some say* he died in the Liang region, but we have no details.' [37] Here, Huijiao was following a practice common in Chinese historiography from the *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals] on. He shows similar restraint in the question of dating the death of the great translator Kumarajīva:

Yet the records regarding the year and month of Kumarajīva's death differ. Some say he died in the seventh year of the Hongshi era, some in the eighth, and others in the eleventh. Looking into the matter, we see that the characters for 'seven' and 'eleven' may be mistaken for each other. Moreover, a catalogue of scripture translations gives the 'first year'. I fear that this is a jumble of the three different dates and we have no means of correcting them. [38]

What is interesting here is Huijiao's commitment to presenting conflicting sources that he himself was unable to reconcile. This is very much in keeping with the principles of formal Chinese historiography—a tradition that elite monks like Huijiao saw themselves as a part of. [39] Such comments are most common when attempting to resolve problems of dates and names. In one instance, Huijiao, who had no apparent knowledge of Sanskrit, intervened in the biography of an Indian monk in order to attempt to explain discrepancies in the transliteration of his name in various sources: 'His name was Tanwuchen. Some give it as Tanmochan, while others as Tanwuchan.' [40] Nonetheless, in this instance, as in the case of the date of the death of Kumarajīva, Huijiao presents contradictory sources, even when he cannot determine which is correct.

At times, however, Huijiao does specifically point out an error in one of his sources. The reasons he gives for these errors reflect his own historiographical

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[37] *Gaoseng zhuan*, 333a.   [38] Ibid., 332c.
[39] Most famously, Confucius was said to have recorded two death dates for Marquis Bao of Chen in the *Chunqiu*. See Burton Watson, *Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Grand Historian of China* (New York, 1958), 80.
[40] *Gaoseng zhuan*, 335c.

standards. In some cases, as in Kumarajīva's dates, he blames the mistake on sloppy copying. In other cases, the problem is careless reading. He notes, for instance, that some authors were unfamiliar with the important innovation of the prominent monk Daoan who instituted the practice of Chinese monks taking *Shi*, short for Śākyamuni, as their surname, rather than taking the monastic surname—usually based on the country of origin—of their immediate teacher. This ignorance led to a mistake in some accounts of Daoan himself. Huijiao notes first a letter written to Daoan by the famous figure Xi Zuochi, but then points out that others misunderstood the identity of the recipient of the letter. As Huijiao writes:

According to a separate record, 'In Hebei there is another monk called Zhu Daoan, who shares the name of Shi Daoan.' This account claims that it was to Zhu Daoan that Xi Zuochi wrote his letter. Originally, Daoan followed his teacher,[41] choosing the surname Zhu. Later, he changed his surname from Zhu to Shi. When people saw the two surnames, they took them as representing two different people. This is an error.[42]

In contrast to Indian sources, in which authors were largely uninterested in dates, the best Chinese Buddhist historians, in addition to filling their writings with dates, considered sorting out problems of chronology in the sources one of their major duties, and often exercised great skill in doing so. In his biography of An Shigao, Huijiao quotes from a source 'another account' (*biezhuan*) that relates a story that, at the end of the Taikang era (*c.*289), An Shigao sealed a letter that he left in a monastery with the instruction that it not be opened until four years had passed. When the letter was opened, four years later, it read, 'The one to revere my teachings is the layman Chen Hui; the one to transmit the *dhyana* scriptures is the *bhikṣu* Senghui.' After recording the story, Huijiao expresses his doubts, writing:

The content of An Shigao's sealed letter states: 'The one to revere my teachings is the layman Chen Hui; the one to transmit the *dhyana* scriptures is the bhikṣu Senghui.' Now, in (An Shigao's work) *Anban*, *dhyana* is spoken of at great length. From this we can believe that the record in the letter is true. But as it says that his teachings will only be spread with the two men he mentions, how can they be his contemporaries?

Moreover, the account states (that in An Shigao's letter he wrote) 'The one to transmit the dhyana scriptures is the bhikṣu Senghui.' Yet Senghui died already at the beginning of the Taikang era (280). How could the Master of the Way, the Marquis of An (An

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[41] Daoan's teacher, best known as Fotucheng, was surnamed Zhu.

[42] *Gaoseng zhuan*, 354. The biography of Daoan is translated in full with annotations in Arthur E. Link, 'Biography of Shih Tao-an', *T'oung Pao*, 46 (1958), 1–48. Huijiao was himself not immune to making this sort of mistake. See Arthur F. Wright, 'Seng-jui Alias Hui-jui: A Biographical Bisection in the *Kao-seng chuan*', in Kshitis Roy (ed.), *Liebenthal Festschrift* (Santiniketan, 1957), 272–94.

Shigao), appear (and compose his letter foretelling that Senghui would transmit his teachings) at the end of the Taikang era (289)? The beginning and end of the text contradict each other.

(The account) must be following a letter mistakenly dated to the beginning of the Jin (*c.*265). Later writers then either dated it to the Taikang or to the end of the Wu (*c.*280). Discrepancies ran rampant and no one put them right. Even the claim that this happened at the beginning of the Jin is troubling. Yet Tanzong's record states that only during the time of Emperor Ai of the Jin (r. 362–365) did An Shigao return to administer his monastery. This is in error to the point of absurdity.[43]

The story that An Shigao wrote in a sealed letter that the layman Chen Hui and the monk Senghui would one day propagate his teachings is in one way an accurate description of what happened, in that Kang Senghui and Chen Hui did in fact write important commentaries on An Shigao's works. But rather than observe that these two figures were important in the propagation of An Shigao's translations, the text Huijiao drew on couches their role in a fantastic story of An Shigao mysteriously predicting the future. The point of the story was apparently more to underline An Shigao's supernormal abilities than it was to describe the influence of his teachings. Disturbing to Huijiao, however, was the fact that the dates the story supplies do not add up. First of all, An Shigao is said to have made his prediction in 289, close to ten years after Kang Senghui's death. What is more, even allowing for a scribal error, since Kang Senghui, Chen Hui, and An Shigao were roughly contemporaries, it makes no sense for An Shigao to make predictions about how they would act in the future. Equally troubling was the claim that An Shigao was still alive in the fourth century, which would have made him several hundred years old. At this point, Huijiao cannot help but express his contempt for those who neglect the principles of accurate dating of events to such an extent.[44] At the same time, rather than dismiss the entire story of An Shigao's prophecy as a pious myth, Huijiao ascribes the discrepancy to a mistake in the dating of the letter.

Similarly, commenting on a famous story of an encounter between Kang Senghui and the ruler Sun Quan, in which the doubting Sun attempts to destroy holy relics that Senghui has miraculously produced on demand, Huijiao notes:

One record states that it was Sun Hao who smashed the relics and that this did not happen during the time of [Sun] Quan. To this I note that when Sun Hao was about to destroy a monastery, his ministers responded by saying 'This monastery was created by the Great Emperor [Sun Quan] in response to the auspicious miracle performed by Senghui.' From this we can know that the first *śarīra* miracle must have taken place during the time of Sun Quan. Hence various accounts all say that Sun Quan experienced

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[43] *Gaoseng zhuan*, 324b.

[44] Antonio Forte, though focusing on An Shigao's descendants, also attempts to recover a historical core from the various legends about this mysterious figure in his *The Hostage An Shigao and his Offspring* (Kyoto, 1995).

the *śarīra* miracle in his palace. Later, if there were other tests of the divine power (of the relics), these may have been carried out by Sun Hao.[45]

Comments such as these are remarkable, not only for their critical rigour, but also because the authors scrupulously recount the passages they dismiss as impossible, recording for later readers the historiographical puzzle, along with its solution. At the same time, they also highlight the historians' limitations. While recognizing problems in a given source, Huijiao seldom took the next step of challenging their authenticity altogether. From the perspective of the modern historian, suspicious of the whole notion of prophecy, the inconsistency in dating in the story of An Shigao's prophecy suggests that the story was rooted in legend, and does not reflect an actual event in the monk's life. But monastic historians were extremely reluctant to pass such extreme judgements, and so, even in these cases, turned to favourite explanations of faulty dating and confusion of names to resolve historiographical conundrums. Nowhere, for instance, does Huijiao suggest that a faulty account was the result of bias, or an intentional attempt to distort the historical record.

BUDDHIST DOCTRINE

Huijiao's sharp critical eye for discrepancies in names and dates did not extend to criticism of fabulous claims for supernormal powers, with which he was completely at ease. He describes, for instance, how the monk Fotucheng

had a hole in his left breast, four to five inches in circumference, that opened straight through to his insides. Sometimes he would remove his intestines. He at times stopped up the hole with floss. At night when he wished to read, he would remove the floss at which point the entire room would fill with light. Also, on days of fasting, he would go to the river, take out his intestines, wash them, and then place them back in his body.[46]

Most jarring for the modern reader are the moments when the Buddhist historian, with characteristic rigour, notices a discrepancy in sources, but then proceeds to invoke the miraculous to explain it. Huijiao, for instance, puzzles over the differences in accounts of the life of An Shigao, saying, 'I have gone through all of the writings, but there are discrepancies between the records of An Shigao. It is perhaps that his provisional manifestations disappear and appear again in any number of ways, responding (to conditions) or not.'[47]

Of particular note, however, are the instances in which Huijiao applies his knowledge of Buddhist doctrine to explain extraordinary feats and occurrences.

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[45] *Gaoseng zhuan*, 326b.   [46] Ibid., 386c–387a.
[47] Ibid., 324a. The passage continues with the more pedestrian possibility that the discrepancies in An Shigao's biography may be the result of errors in transmission.

Take, for example, his attempt to evaluate the spiritual attainments of the monk Zhiyan. Huijiao writes:

He then walked all the way back to Jibin (Kashmir). He passed away, though without signs of illness. At that time he was seventy-eight. According to the laws of that country, the ordinary and the holy are cremated in separate areas. Although Zhiyan was lofty in his command of the precepts, he did not carry them out in practice. When they first moved his corpse to the cemetery for ordinary monks, the corpse became so heavy that it could not be moved. When they changed and moved it in the direction of the cemetery for holy monks it became as light as could be. Zhiyan's disciples Zhiyu and Zhiyuan returned from the West to report this auspicious omen. They both then left the country. From this we can conclude that Yan had achieved the Way; it is just that we cannot determine the depths of his attainments among the '(four) fruits'.[48]

The 'four fruits' refers to the four basic levels of spiritual attainment: the level of one who has 'entered the stream' and is hence irrevocably on the way to enlightenment; a 'once returner', who will only be reborn one more time before achieving enlightenment; a 'non-returner', who will achieve enlightenment in this life; and finally, an arhat, or enlightened being. Passages like this demonstrate that for Huijiao and other Buddhist historians it was not enough to praise a monk's spiritual attainments: a part of the historian's job was to appeal to technical Buddhist literature to provide an accurate assessment of a monk's abilities. Subsequent historians, such as the seventh-century monk Daoxuan and the tenth-century monk Zanning, made even greater use of interlineal commentary to explain that particular traits exhibited by monks were examples of supernormal powers described in detail in Buddhist scripture, or to explain historical events on the basis of the principle of karmic retribution.

THE LEGACY OF THE *GAOSENG ZHUAN*

Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan* is recorded in Buddhist bibliographies from the early sixth century on. Later historians of Buddhism, from the medieval period up to modern times, refer to it often; soon after its composition, the *Gaoseng zhuan* was the standard source for biographies of monks from the period. Three works attempted to continue the tradition established by Huijiao's book: the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* [Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks], compiled by Daoxuan in the seventh century; the *Song gaoseng zhuan* [Song Biographies of Eminent Monks], compiled by Zanning at the end of the tenth century; and the *Ming gaoseng zhuan* [Ming Biographies of Eminent Monks], compiled by Ruxing in

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[48] Ibid., 339c.

the early seventeenth century. Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan* was reproduced frequently, and circulated both independently and as a part of the Buddhist canon. Early versions of it made their way to Korea and Japan. There, the format and style of the 'Biographies' were imitated, most directly in Korea in the *Haedong Kosung Chon* [Biographies of Eminent Korean Monks].[49] The *Gaoseng zhuan* remains the most widely read Buddhist historical work in East Asia today.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

202 BC–AD 220	Han Dynasty
220–581	Six Dynasties Period (a time when China was divided into many overlapping regimes)
	Three Kingdoms 220–280
	Jin Dynasty 265–420
	Southern Dynasties 420–581
	Northern Dynasties 386–581
581–618	Sui Dynasty
618–907	Tang Dynasty

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[49] For a translation, see Peter H. Lee, *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969).

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Chapter 23

Historical Traditions in Early India:
c. 1000 BC to *c.* AD 600

Romila Thapar

REPRESENTING THE PAST

A couple of hundred years ago it was stated that Indian civilization was unique in that it lacked historical writing and, by implication therefore, a sense of history. This was said to apply generally to the pre-modern period, but more so to the earlier period. With rare exceptions there has been little attempt to examine this generalization, as it has been taken as given. Nevertheless, while there may not be historical writing of a conventional form as we know it now, there are many texts that reflect historical consciousness which later became the basis for historical traditions. We need to look for the nature and assumptions of these traditions and the historical concerns that underlie them.

In recognizing the historical traditions of early times the criteria are likely to differ from those of modern times. Modern notions of history have been governed by definitions that emerged from the Enlightenment, with an emphasis on sequential narrative and chronology, and a focus on political authority. In India this was overlaid by colonial views on representing the past. Subsequent to this, nationalisms asserted that history was the single narrative truth about the past, and generally one that contributed to the ideological foundations of the nation.

However, assessing these narratives as genres of texts and evaluating their claims to being a record of the past requires them to be judged by an accepted historical method in order to demarcate the credible from fantasy, although fantasy may be a way of disguising reality. The concern today is less with whether historical writing was absent in early India, as has been frequently maintained, and more with the nature and assumptions of its historical traditions. Furthermore, in examining the texts to find such traditions, the aim is not to claim historicity for each event they recount, but rather to search for the historical concerns of societies.

For a variety of reasons it is now necessary to re-examine the question of the sense of history in early India.[1] The definition of history has undergone change and is no longer confined to the Enlightenment view. A sense of history implies a construction of the past, but it does not have to be identical with modern historical writing.

Before considering the texts that claim to represent the early Indian past, two aspects need to be considered. Since historical traditions of diverse cultures inevitably differ in their form, comparative studies have to be more precise and differentiated than they have been so far. Equally important is the question of why it was necessary to argue that Indian civilization lacked a sense of history. This was largely, but not entirely, a colonial argument with emphases that derived partially from the Enlightenment definition of history, but more from the obvious vantage point of a colonial administration constructing an entirely new history for the colony.

As a preliminary step it might be useful to explain what I mean by historical consciousness, historical tradition, and historical writing. Historical consciousness is an awareness of events and persons from the past, with the claim that what is being narrated happened, as is implicit in the term *itihāsa*: 'thus indeed it was'. Historical consciousness is often embedded in compositions that have other functions—frequently ritual functions. We tend to dismiss historical consciousness by applying the rules of verification, but historical consciousness is not identical with history and it also differs from historical tradition. The latter is a construction representing the past—a specific mode of making sense of the past—and can be used to orient the present. Historical writing in various forms marks a departure. It is not embedded in texts with other functions. It draws from historical traditions and creates categories of texts specific to its requirement. The narrative seeks verification by indicating its sources—explicit or implicit—provides reasonable causal explanations of the events, and is generally concerned with those in authority.

DIVERSE HISTORICAL TRADITIONS AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE INDIAN TRADITION

The historiography most frequently taken as the measure of historical writing is the Judaeo-Christian. It has been argued that this had a clear teleology, forming part of a larger eschatology, and time was linear. These characteristics were not so evident in Graeco-Roman, Chinese, and Indian traditions, where eschatology

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[1] David Gordon White, ' "Digging Wells While Houses Burn?" Writing Histories of Hinduism in a Time of Identity Politics', *History and Theory*, 45:4 (2006), 104–31; and Velcheru Narayana Rao, David Shulman, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Textures of Time: Writing History in South India, 1600–1800* (Delhi, 2005).

was weak and where time took various forms—linear, spiral, and cyclic. The need to explain the occurrence of past events leads to the explanation contributing to the formulation of historiography.

Much has been made of the lack of history in India being tied to a cyclic concept of time—an insistence which continues despite research to the contrary.[2] Linear time in India is evident from the extensive incorporation of genealogies and the use of eras and precise systems of dating; and even more so in the shift in astronomy from lunar to solar reckoning.

A sharp dichotomy between linear and cyclic time is not feasible, since some elements of each intersect, although pertaining to different functions. Cyclic time in the concept of the four *yugas* (cycles or ages) is often viewed as cosmological time, whereas the more measured time in individual chronologies is linear. Where cyclic time takes a spiral form it can be seen as a wave, and ultimately almost linear when stretched. Such variations in the Indian texts suggest a heterogeneous time calculation. Even in the span of four *yugas*, the present is not a repetition of the past, since each age differs from the previous one.

Eschatology is known to the Indian traditions even in cyclic time, but the pattern is unlike the more linear eschatology of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. The perfection of the first *yuga* gradually declines, largely because of the distancing from norms and beliefs, as well as the increase in non-meritorious behaviour. Eventually the catastrophic end is so imminent that it requires a saviour-figure. This was the *brāhmaṇa* Kalkin, the final incarnation of Viṣṇu, in the Puranic tradition; or the Buddha Maitreya, the Buddha to come, in the Buddhist tradition. In each case it was believed that the universe, or the faith, would be restored to its pristine condition. Even this well-known information is seldom brought into the discussion on possible historical traditions. Why there was a refusal to concede the existence of any historical tradition requires enquiry.

THE ABSENCE OF HISTORICAL WRITING IN INDIA

The search for indigenous histories of early India began in the late eighteenth century. European scholars, familiar by this time with historical writing as a distinct category of literature, looked for the same in the Sanskrit articulation of what came to be called Hindu/Indian civilization, and were unable to find it. For instance, when the philologist William Jones suspected that there might be history in the myths and legends of the *Purāṇas*, most disagreed.[3] Even Jones

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[2] Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York, 1959). For a critique of this position, see Romila Thapar, *Time as a Metaphor of History: Early India* (Delhi, 1996).

[3] *Asiatic Researches*, 4 (1807), xvii ff.

quotes only one example of historical writing, the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, written by Kalhaṇa in the twelfth century AD. Indian civilization was therefore defined as ahistorical. Comparisons with the Chinese accounts of Sima Qian, or the writing in Arabic of Ibn Khaldun, or even the biblical genealogies, not to mention Graeco-Roman narratives, strengthened, if only in contrast, the axiom of Indian society denying history.

The officers of the East India Company, primarily interested in law and religion to assist them in administering their Indian colonies, derived information from their *brāhmaṇa* informants. Inevitably, the texts of Vedic Brahmanism, such as the *Vedas*, setting out ritual and belief, and the *Dharmaśāstras*, the codes governing caste and social obligations, had priority. Other systems of knowledge, especially the Buddhist and the Jaina, were assessed as inferior branches of Hinduism, particularly since they were regarded as deviant by *brāhmaṇas*. There was little attempt at placing texts in a wider discourse of alternative systems of knowledge.

In Europe, German Romanticism made much of what came to be called the Oriental Renaissance.[4] Religion and mysticism were said to be characteristic of Indian culture to the virtual exclusion of rational ways of organizing knowledge. The argument that in India caste, viewed as civil society, overwhelmed the state meant that without a state there could be no history. For Hegel therefore, India was a land without recorded history.[5]

The enthusiasm for Sanskrit in some circles fed into an influential theory of language, race, and culture—that of the Aryan race. Applied to India it became the explanation for the Aryan origins of Indian civilization, and this is turn was equated with the Brahmanism of the *Vedas.* Since the latter had little concern for history, the notion of an absence of history was reinforced.

In the nineteenth century, a different reconstruction of Indian history drew on premises that precluded the need for an historical tradition. It underpinned the requirements of colonial policy in a changing relationship between the colonial power and the colony.[6] A denial of a sense of history was implicit in its major theory—that of Oriental Despotism. This was articulated at length in what became the hegemonic text of the colonial construction of Indian history: James Mill's *The History of British India,* published 1819–23.[7] Indian society was said to be static and, since it did not register change, it had no use for recording the past, one of the functions of the past being to legitimize the present. This stasis could only be broken by British administration legislating change. Mill's *History* was

⁴ Raymond Schwab, *La Renaissance Orientale* (Paris, 1950).

⁵ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (1837; New York, 1958), 140–1, 162–4.

⁶ Romila Thapar, 'Ideology and the Interpretation of Early Indian History', in ead., *Interpreting Early India* (Delhi, 2000); and Ronald B. Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford, 1990).

⁷ Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India* (Oxford, 1992).

defining a new idiom for imperial control. Other arguments attributed the absence of a sense of history to a lack of sub-continental political unity, or to the subordination of the human will to the divine, or to obsessive religion and the control of the *brāhmaṇa* over intellectual activities.

Arguing for the absence of indigenous history had the practical advantage of allowing the formulation of a history for the colony that would underpin colonial policy. Colonial attitudes to knowledge pertaining to their colonies assumed that such knowledge enhanced control. Thus William Jones wrote of the itihasas and puranas being 'in our power', and a century later Lord Curzon saw the intellectual discovery of the Orient as the necessary furniture of the empire. The collection of manuscripts and artefacts for the reconstruction of history became an avid activity. Equally impressive were the decipherment of scripts and archaeological discoveries. However, the oral compositions of the bards, collected and written about by James Tod and L. P. Tessitori, were generally bypassed by historians. In the larger flow of explaining the past, colonial preconceptions tended to colour the narrative. Even the intellectually challenging discussions in Europe on the nature of history as an emerging discipline had little impact on Indologists and colonial historians. Aspects of modern history focusing on demands for democracy and political freedom in the West were deliberately excluded from the prescribed texts.[8]

The Orient as 'the Other' of Europe became almost obsessive among those theorizing on histories beyond Europe. Karl Marx emphatically denied the existence of a sense of history in India. Max Weber attributed the lack of transition to capitalism—as a manifestation of Otherness—to a failure of economic rationalism.

Indian historians initially subscribed to the colonial view and accepted that Indian society was ahistorical. More recently the subject has occasioned passing comments. The first collection of essays on the subject tended to repeat the premises of the older theory.[9] An attempted introduction to categories of texts claiming to be historical was unaccompanied by a discussion of the claim.[10] An important discussion of historical biographies as historical tradition has remained without a follow-up.[11] Other arguments maintain that an historical tradition existed but was weak because of the decentralized nature of political institutions and the exclusive control of the *brāhmaṇas* over the transmission of the tradition.[12] The bifurcation of the *brāhmaṇas*, who might have made a critical assessment, and

[8] Aravind Ganachari, 'Imperialist Appropriation and Disciplining the Indian Mind', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43:5 (February 2008), 77–87.

[9] C. H. Philips (ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* (London, 1961).

[10] Anthony Kennedy Warder, *An Introduction to Indian Historiography* (Bombay, 1972).

[11] Vishwambhar Sharan Pathak, *Ancient Historians of India* (Bombay, 1966).

[12] Burton Stein, 'Early Indian Historiography: A Conspiracy Hypothesis', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 6:1 (1969), 40–60.

the scribal castes has also been suggested.[13] More defensive views state that history has been formatted through modernization processes, and Indian civilization has been unconcerned with these.[14] Such explanations are inadequate.

That the idea of an historical tradition in pre-modern India is now attracting some attention is suggested by a few studies that are concerned with demonstrating the existence of such traditions and the manner of their use in society and politics. It emanates from the redefinition of history in recent times, through locating history as a social science, from studies of memory to a defence of history faced with a sentence of death pronounced by post-modernism. Most of these studies focus on the second millennium AD and have not gone further back in time.[15]

HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE HISTORICAL TRADITION

Research of the last half-century has made it apparent that early Indian society was not static and was subject to change, and the change was not uniform in space and time. Two processes of change are evident and have continued through the centuries. One was the mutation of clan societies or lineage-based societies into castes, as part of their assimilation into state systems in the form of kingdoms. The other was the transformation of early kingdoms into more complex state systems. With historical change, new identities emerged and the past was reformulated. Historical consciousness implicit in the first mutation was converted into an historical tradition in the second. Both processes are reflected in what comes under the rubric of the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition. *Itihāsa* literally means, 'thus indeed it was', and has come to be used now as 'history', but earlier it was not history in any modern sense of the term. *Purāṇa* refers to that which is old, and includes what we would now call legend or even myth.

The *itihāsa-purāṇa*, or early Indian historical tradition, has two distinctly different historiographies, both of which came to be established by the mid first

[13] H. Kulke, 'Geschichtschreibung und Geschichtsbild in Hindustechen Mittelalter', *Secculum*, 30 (1979), 100–13.

[14] Ashis Nandy, 'History's Forgotten Doubles', *History and Theory*, 34:2 (1995), 44–66; and see also Vinay Lal, *History of History* (Delhi, 2002), 14–16, 58–60.

[15] Daud Ali, 'Royal Eulogy as World History', in Ronald B. Inden, Jonathan S. Walters, and Ali (eds.), *Querying the Medieval: Texts and the History of Practices in South Asia* (Delhi, 2000); Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam, *Textures of Time* (see also the review articles of this book and the authors' response in *History and Theory*, 43:3 [2007], 366–427); Prachi Deshpande, *Creative Pasts: Historical Memory and Identity in Western India, 1700–1960* (Delhi, 2007); and Sumit Guha, 'Speaking Historically: the Changing Voices of Historical Narration in Western India, 1400–1900', *American Historical Review* 109:4 (2004), 1084–103.

millennium AD. The more commonly referred to is the Puranic, which emerges from the *Purāṇas* and related texts, and draws largely on sources composed or edited by *brāhmaṇas.* The other, which has not been given the recognition it deserves, draws from Śramanic ideologies—primarily Buddhist and Jaina.[16] The events and personalities which each highlight from the past often differ or else are represented in different forms. There is an awareness of alternative views which, although not always stated as such, are nevertheless reflected either in borrowings or contradictions.

The period covered in this chapter is from about 500 BC to AD 600, but with forays into earlier times where necessary. Historical concerns during this period are evident in distinctive forms. The first is historical consciousness, which comes in an embedded form in texts with other functions. The second consists of forms that embody this consciousness and give it a distinctive identity as historical traditions. The embodied or externalized forms not subordinated to other functions come later as new genres of texts and expressions of the historical tradition. There is a shift from the representation of historical consciousness to the creation of an historical tradition.

THE EMBEDDED TRADITION: THE BIRTH OF THE HERO

The embedded tradition goes back to the *dāna-stutis* (in praise of gift-giving), which were hymns in the *Ṛgveda,* generally dated to about 1400–1000 BC.[17] Priest-poets composed hymns in Vedic Sanskrit in praise of the god Indra protecting his worshippers from their human and demonic enemies, and also assisting them to carry out successful raids to capture cattle-wealth and pastures. Indra became the model hero emulated by the aspiring human hero.[18] The human hero was eulogized not only for his heroism, but also for making gifts (*dāna*) for the poet who had composed the hymn. Victorious rajas by these accounts gave generous, if not exaggeratedly large, gifts to the composers.[19] The praise is both for the act of heroism that brought about the victory, and for the gift to the composer of the eulogy. Lauding the hero and the gift-giving as an act of patronage were to remain in tandem. The gift, symbolic of success and status, provided a precedent for future occasions, and became a bond between the giver and the recipient. Locating the narrative in a text that was memorized for ritual purposes ensured that the event and the hero would become part of the

[16] Sramanic is derived from *śramana*, the term used for Buddhist and Jaina monks.

[17] *Rig-Veda-Samhita*, ed. F. Max Müller (London, 1892); and Ralph T. H. Griffith, *The Hymns of the Ṛgveda* (1896–1897; 2nd edn, Varanasi, 1963).

[18] *Ṛgveda*, 7.20.5; 3.30.4; 8.46.13; 3.51.3.

[19] Romila Thapar, '*Dāna* and *Dakṣiṇā* as Forms of Exchange', in ead., *Cultural Pasts: Essays in Early Indian History* (Delhi, 2000), 521–535.

Ancient India *c.*500 BC.

remembered tradition about the past. The composers claimed that they were immortalizing the hero, as indeed they were.

The hymns reflect a society of clans organized into chiefdoms. The clan was a kin-based unit of agro-pastoralists, relatively egalitarian but accepting the authority of a chief—the raja—who was selected by the clan. The chief protected the territory of the clan, captured fresh pasture lands, conducted raids, distributed the booty, and was often the patron of the sacrificial ritual.[20] These were the required qualities of the hero, and continued to be in demand into later times. The hymns of the *Ṛgveda* in various incidental ways recorded relations of friendship or hostility between clans. Hostility often took the form of skirmishes. But a more serious confrontation was when Sudās defended himself against a confederacy of ten other clans. Of the ten, there were some, such as the Yadus and Pūrus, that feature in the later epics. There is some information on kinship links between individuals, although genealogical depth is small and does not exceed five generations.

Rituals that bestow status on rajas were the *abhiṣeka*, *rājasūya*, *aśvamedha*, and *vājapeya*, intended for consecration, claims to conquest and sovereignty, and rejuvenation, and described in the texts subsequent to the *Ṛgveda*. The rajas that performed these rituals in previous times are listed, and this became the remembered past—part history and part legend. The politics of heroism were highly competitive, and remained so until chieftainship became hereditary or was mutated into kingship. The retelling of the narrative by the *brāhmaṇas* came to imply authenticity.

This was the starting point of what was to become the frequency of *praśastis* (eulogies) in recording the activities of those who had authority. The composers were the poets (*kavis*) who could also be bards (*sūtas*) or ritual specialists (*brāhmaṇas*) attached to the entourage of the chief. The elaborate narratives (*akhyānas*) recited in the course of the *aśvamedha* became the prototypes of the narratives woven into the epic.[21]

Fragmentary narratives of heroes and clans were common currency and part of a large floating oral tradition, probably maintained by bards. Some remained separate entities, as in the Buddhist *Jātaka* collection. Others were stitched together in epic forms such as the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The dates of the epics are controversial given the likelihood of interpolations requiring restructuring of the composition. Their present forms have been dated to anywhere between *circa* 400 BC to *circa* AD 200. What is of interest is not only their claim to be recalling past events, but also how these were modified to suit specific current perspectives.

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[20] Romila Thapar, *From Lineage to State: Social Formations in the Mid-First Millennium* B.C. *in the Ganga Valley* (1984; 2nd edn, Delhi, 1996), 26 ff.

[21] *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,* 7.18.10; 3.21.1; and *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa,* 13.4.3.2.

The embedded tradition becomes somewhat more visible in the epics.[22] The *Mahābhārata* was the knitting together of many *akhyānas*, gathered from Vedic and oral traditions. Its sheer size suggests a compendium rather than a unitary composition, and the boxing in of narratives allows for many events and persons to be accommodated—not unusual in the compiling of epics. It is said to have been composed in Sanskrit by the *brāhmaṇa* Vyāsa, but also recited by his disciple, the *sūta* (bard) Romaharṣaṇa.[23] The relationship of bard to *brāhmaṇa* was ambiguous. The latter gradually edged out the former as the one who legitimized the patron and recorded events. Vyāsa had an uncertain status, with a *brāhmaṇa* father and a low-caste mother. In effect, the epic was a bardic composition with didactic additions.[24] These additions, together with explanatory legends, are so substantial that the narrative tends to become submerged. The epic was recited at a *sattra*, a ritual of sacrifice, and this echoes the recital of *akhyānas* as part of the *aśvamedha*. It is described most often as an *itihāsa*, thus emphasizing the belief in the events having happened.

The core story involves the rivalry of two co-lateral lineages—that of the Pāṇḍavas and of the Kauravas—and their claims over territory in the western Ganges plain. Ruling lineages were generally, but not invariably, of the *kṣatriya* caste, that began as a group identified with chiefs and warriors, and evolved into a land-owning aristocracy in later times. The territory under dispute is divided into two parts, and is ruled by the Kauravas from Hastinapur and by the Pāṇḍavas from Indraprastha. (On the assumption that the current place names are locations for the earlier sites, both have been partially and vertically excavated, but do not provide close co-relations with epic descriptions, which is generally in keeping with the archaeology of epic sites.) The prosperity and status of the Pāṇḍavas riles the Kauravas and, through a series of competitive events, the Pāṇḍavas are exiled for fourteen years. Inevitably this terminates in a battle between the two at Kurukṣetra, which becomes a major time marker in viewing the past. The battle is said to have drawn in most of the clans of northern India as allies of one of the two antagonists, and virtually marks the termination of clans.

It is essentially an epic of clan polities. The patrons were the rajas, especially the Kuru-Pañcāla clans, also referred to in the earlier Vedic texts, who were asserting their authority as major chiefdoms. The epic is a kind of *praśasti* of some of the Pāṇḍavas, and in a left-handed way, of a few Vṛṣṇis. The two co-lateral lineages are said to be descended from the Pūru line, and the Vṛṣṇis from the Yadu line. This ancestry links them to the earlier texts, and the *Mahābhārata*

[22]   J. L. Brockington, *The Sanskrit Epics* (Leiden, 1998).

[23]   V. S. Sukhthankar et al. (eds.), *Mahābhārata*, critical edn, 19 vols. (Poona, 1927–66), *Adiparvan*, 1.1–10.

[24]   Edward Washburn Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India* (New York, 1901); and V. S. Sukthankar, *On the Meaning of the Mahābhārata* (Bombay, 1957).

provides a considerably longer genealogy than the Vedic corpus. The epic, in a sense, is both an enlargement and a restructuring of some earlier compositions. A more detailed past was now required. Recovering the original epic is complicated by the many interpolations, and by the rearranging of the narratives in the present form. It has been argued that a particular category of *brāhmaṇas*, the Bhṛgus, altered the story in parts, added the didactic sections, and converted a relatively secular epic into the sacred literature of what was to take the form of Vaiṣṇava Bhagavatism, the worship of Visnu.[25] Such Bhṛguisation, as it has been called, gave an identity to the protagonists and their historical context. Rewriting the past or incorporating interpolations reflects various moments seen as historically significant.

Apart from its other purposes, the *Mahābhārata* was also an attempt to record the history of the chiefdoms through claims to kinship, territory, and raids. It emphasized a new feature linked to status: namely, genealogies. In the installation of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, there are contested claims. Neither was connected by blood to the previous generation, and this defied the rules of succession; therefore, genealogical links were forged to gloss over this lacuna. The battle at Kurukṣetra was a conflict over succession within the larger Pūru lineage. But, in effect, it also marked the final decline of the *kṣatriyas* as lineage groups representing clan polities. It becomes a statement on the decline of chiefdoms as a political system.

There is much that was remembered in the *Mahābhārata* as a suggestion of history. There was nostalgia for a past society that was largely disbanded after the war. The epic makes an attempt to construct fragments of that society, whether remembered or partially fictional, to record clans and their rajas, and to map significant settlements. Locating this past society in time involved introducing measurements of time. This took the form of the cosmological cycles of time, the *yugas*. The introduction of the *yuga* theory into time-reckoning may well have been part of the process of the Bhṛguisation of the epic. The *mahāyuga*, great cyclic span of time, envisaged a series of four ages—Kṛta, Treta, Dvāpara, and Kali—each declining in length, and characterized by a corresponding decline in righteousness. The enormous and differentiated lengths of time in each age of the *yuga* theory, adding up to 4,320,000 human years (the figures were probably borrowed from those used in astronomy), make even approximate measurement in human terms impossible. The epic events are said to have occurred at the turning of the Dvāpara *yuga* into the Kaliyuga. The start of the Kaliyuga has been dated by a later reckoning to 3102 BC.[26] This is an unlikely date, given that even the locations do not reveal archaeological settlements of an appropriate kind. The actual date would not have been as relevant as the notion

[25] V. S. Sukhtankar et al., 'The Bhṛgus and the Bharatas: A Text-historical Study', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 18 (1944), 1–76.
[26] The Aihole Inscription, *Epigraphia Indica,* vol. 6 (1900–1), 1 ff.

that what followed after the period of the *kṣatriya* lineages was a radical change.

The centrality of *vaṃśas*, lineages, and therefore genealogies, taken back to a supposedly remote past, were also setting out other patterns of the past. Cosmological time was seen as cyclic, but the measurement of human activity was more frequently in linear time, as in genealogies. There is therefore an intersection of cyclic and linear time.[27] This recurs in the historical tradition.

The *Mahābhārata* is called an *itihāsa*, perhaps because it was thought to represent the presumed history of inter-clan conflict. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, however, is generally referred to as a *kāvya*, a poetic composition in Sanskrit, and often the *ādikāvya*, the first of such. Its author, Vālmīki, also had an ambiguous origin, although in a late section he is described as a Bhṛgu *brāhmaṇa*.[28] The narrative is of a hero in conflict. But the conflict is less between clans, as in the *Mahabharata*, as between two types of polities—the kingdom versus the chiefdom. The triumph of the kingdom of Ayodhya and of Rāma, exemplifying the ideal king, moves historical consciousness into the transitional period of the conflict between the two systems—one declining and the other becoming foundational to future polities. Societies of forest-dwellers and chiefdoms were now demonized as *rākṣasas*, in contrast to the eulogizing of kingship, where eventually the king can even be the incarnation of deity. Rāma's lineage boasts of many heroes of earlier times. As a political document, the *Rāmāyaṇa* marks the arrival of the state as kingdom, of which the epic is a validation.[29]

The story is stereotypical. Rāma was the eldest son of the king of Kosala, and by rights should have succeeded his father. The intervention of his step-mother led to his being exiled from the capital at Ayodhya into the neighbouring forests and beyond. He was accompanied in exile by his wife, Sītā, and his younger brother, Lakṣmaṇa. During the exile, Rāvaṇa, who ruled over the demons, kidnapped Sītā and took her away to his home territory, Lankā. Rāma had then to organize an army with the help of his allies, who were substantially a force of monkeys, and defeat Rāvana in battle and rescue Sītā. In later interpolations, when he assumed the kingship of Ayodhya he faced public suspicion of her faithfulness to him and eventually banished her. Being pregnant she took refuge in the hermitage of the sage Vālmīki, where her twin sons were born. Vālmīki composed the narrative, and the two boys learned it as would have bards. Curiously, the names given to the twins, *kuśilavah*, refer to bards. They then recite the epic poem at the *aśvamedha* ritual, the patron of which was their father, Rāma. The first recitation of the epic was again at a ritual occasion.

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[27] Thapar, *Time as a Metaphor of History*.
[28] G. H. Bhatt et al. (eds.), *The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, critical edn, 7 vols. (Baroda, 1960–75); and *The Rāmāyana of Vālmīki*, trans. R. Goldman, 5 vols. (Princeton, 1984–).
[29] Romila Thapar, 'The *Rāmāyaṇa*: Theme and Variation', in ead., *Cultural Pasts*, 647–79.

The extremely brief Buddhist version of the story of Rāma differs and does not include the kidnapping of Sītā.[30] The version, as given in the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa,* is questioned in a Jaina version, the *Paumacariyam* of Vimalasūri, written in the early centuries AD.[31] There is an insistence on the historicity of the Jaina version, with the other versions being described as incorrect. The central events are broadly similar, but the depiction of Rāvaṇa and the *rākṣasas* as demons is negated. Instead of being depicted as demons, the people of the forest are identified with well-known lineages and clans, the Vidyādharas and the Meghavāhanas. The latter in other sources are linked to the Cedis, who in turn were part of the Yādava/Yadu descent group. A political dialogue is implied in these contradictions. The questioning appears to be less about the historicity of the story but more about the demonizing and downgrading of the clan societies in the Vālmīki version.

It could be argued that at the root of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story there appears to have been a political conflict between the lineages of the Ikṣvākus and those of the Yādavas, and this conflict is mentioned in passing in a later source. The Vālmīki epic was lending political support to the Ikṣvāku lineage, and referring to its earlier heroes, and annulling the status of the Yādava descent groups. Furthermore, it was not just a narration of inter-clan conflict but also a depiction of the triumph of kingship as a political institution over the earlier form of chieftainships. It would seem that the confrontation between the two was intense, as indeed it actually was in the perhaps contemporary history of the long drawn-out campaigns between the kingdom of Magadha (in Bihar) and its neighbour to the north, the clan confederacy of the Vṛjjis. The demonizing of the *rākṣasas*—the forest-dwellers—whose institutions as described seem closer to those of chieftainships than kingdoms, might also have arisen from the encroachments of kingdoms into forested areas, the clearing of which could ensure agrarian activity and its benefits.

As part of the propagation of the worship of Viṣṇu, Rāma in the Vālmīki version was converted into an incarnation of Viṣṇu and worshipped as such. This was the appropriation of a symbol for a new order and opposed to other religious sects who were not primarily worshippers of Viṣṇu, such as the Jainas. It strengthened the idea of kings having divine attributes.

Some scholars have suggested that the epics in their current form carry an underlying theme of brahmanical reaction to the popularity of Buddhism—a popularity encouraged by the patronage of the Mauryan emperor, Aśoka.[32] The didactic additions may have been in part a countering of Śramanic ideas.

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[30] Dasaratha Jātaka, no. 461. See *The Jataka*, ed. E. B. Cowell, 6 vols. (Cambridge, 1895–1907).
[31] *Paumacariyam of Vimalasūri*, ed. Hermann Jacobi (1914; Varanasi, 1962).
[32] J. L. Fitzgerald, 'Introduction to Book 12', in *The Mahābhārata,* trans. Fitzgerald, vol. 7 (Chicago, 2004), 114 ff.; and Alf Hiltebeital, *Rethinking the Mahābhārata* (Chicago, 2001), 15–7, 205–6.

THE REFORMULATION OF THE EMBEDDED TRADITION

Historical consciousness, as expressed in the different Vedic texts and the epics, was in part redesigned into what gradually became an historical tradition, as available in the *Purāṇas*. A characteristic of the latter from the perspective of history is that it claims greater authenticity for *itihāsa* and is a statement about the past; and this statement has a function in later historical traditions.

The *Purāṇas*, as a genre of texts, were composed over the first millennium AD. The *Viṣṇu* and the *Matsya Purāṇas* are among the earlier ones. Possibly as popular texts, the earlier ones were first composed in Prākrit, the more widely used language, and later rendered into Sanskrit by *brāhmaṇa* authors. Each *Purāṇa* focused on the rituals and myths required in the worship of a particular deity, and most incorporated cosmology. Some had a section on the succession of lineages and of dynasties, the *vaṃśānucarita* section, which is of importance to the historical tradition. This gave visibility to the embedded historical consciousness through reformulating what was inherited and constructing from it an historical tradition.[33] This was a watershed between historical consciousness as embedded in ritual and epic texts and the texts that were to be overtly historical. The *vaṃśā nucarita* (lists of succession) was placed in what was otherwise a Vaiṣṇava sectarian text.[34] The association with a ritual text continued.

However, this was virtually an independent section, added on, it would seem, to a religious sectarian text to ensure preservation. It was not integrated into the ritual and religious functions of the *Purāṇas*. Authorship of the texts seems to alternate between the *sūta* (bard) and the *brāhmaṇa*. Presumably, when it was realized that control over the past gave access to power in the present, this control was taken over by *brāhmaṇa* authors. Yet the earlier authorship of the *sūta*, or at least an attribution to the *sūta*, is indirectly stated where the *sūta* participates in the dialogue. The emphasis was less on testing veracity and more on presenting the past in a manner consistent in its own terms.

The *vaṃśānucarita* is a continuous list of succession with few comments. Nevertheless it is possible to discern a pattern incorporating three distinct sections.[35] The first is the narrative that is relatively brief and relates to the pre-diluvian period and the reigns of the fourteen Manus, each ruling for many thousands of years. A cataclysmic flood occurred during the reign of the seventh Manu, Vaivasvata, and is described in the *Matsya Purāṇa*.[36] There is an earlier

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[33] F. E. Pargiter, *The Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* (London, 1922); F. E. Pargiter, *The Puranic Texts of the Dynasties of the Kali Age* (London, 1913); and Romila Thapar, 'Genealogical Patterns as Perceptions of the Past', in ead., *Cultural Pasts*, 709–53.

[34] *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (Bombay, 1963); H. H. Wilson, *The Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (London, 1840); *Matsya Purāṇa*, Anandasrama Series (Poona, 1907); and Vasudeva Sharana Agrawal, *Matsya Purāṇa: A Study* (Varanasi, 1963).

[35] *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Book 4.   [36] *Matsya Purāṇa*, 1.1–34.

reference to this story with some small deviations in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*,[37] and it parallels the Mesopotamian flood legend.[38] The Flood was a time marker separating the somewhat undefined account of the Manus from the precisely set out lineages claiming to be historical. The intervention of deities decreases after the Flood and the heroes are the protagonists.

Subsequent to the Flood, Manu had ten sons who were the ancestors to various lineages of the *kṣatriyas,* and were the heroes, the warrior aristocracy, and the chiefs of earlier times. According to these succession lists, they were persons of relatively equal status and linked through origins and kinship. They were divided into two major lineages: the Sūryavaṁśa, the solar line, and the Candravaṁśa, the lunar line. The former observed the rules of primogeniture, and therefore only the descent of the eldest sons was recorded. The *Rāmāyaṇa* is the story of an exemplary hero of the Ikṣvaku lineage of the Sūryavaṁśa. The Candravaṁśa was more a collection of segmentary lineages, recording all the sons—in effect the clans—who are largely those involved in the events related in the *Mahābhārata.* The quality of the hero differed from the chief within the clan, to the king above and outside the clan.

These lineages were continuous lists of generations, and therefore covered more than the smaller segments referred to in the epics.[39] The lineages petered out after the two battles that had each been the foci of epic events. The more powerful dynasties that succeeded them were generally assigned a lower *śūdra* caste.[40] That genealogies were important is evident, not only from their centrality to the epics, but also from the statement of Megasthenes, the Seleucid ambassador to the Mauryan court in the late fourth century BC, that 153 generations up to this period were recorded in India.[41]

The third section subsequent to epic events lists the dynasties of kings.[42] They are not referred to as *kṣatriyas* but as *bhūpālas* and *nṛpas*—protectors of the earth and of men. This is a statement of historical change in the perception of authority. The kings were identified, not by lineage, but by dynasty and caste, registering a new perception of authority. The lists of dynasties began with the kings of Magadha in about the sixth century BC, and continued with the more important dynasties such as the Śiśunāga, Nanda, Maurya, Śuṅga, Kaṅva, and Āndhra/ Sātvāhana, up to the Gupta dynasty in the fourth century AD. They were presented as being of unequal status since they are of varying *varṇas* (castes), such as *śūdra* and *brāhamaṇa*, from the lowest to the highest. This sets them out as different from the earlier *kṣatriya* rajas. Assigning a low caste to a dynasty

[37] *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 1.8.1.1–10; and *Mahābhārata*, 3.185.
[38] W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-Hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford, 1969).
[39] F. E. Pargiter, *The Ancient Indian Historical Tradition.*
[40] F. E. Pargiter, *The Puranic Texts of the Dynasties of the Kali Age.*
[41] Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* VI. xxi. 59–60 (Loeb Classical Series).
[42] As set out in Pargiter, *The Puranic Texts of the Dynasties of the Kali Age.*

could indicate that they patronized what the *brāhmaṇas* regarded as heterodox sects. Unlike the lineages, the dynasties are unrelated to each other. Kingdoms accommodated this new stratification. These kings are not the subject of *praśastis* (eulogies) as were the *kṣatriyas.* Nevertheless, the projection is of the authority of the king and the state.

The dynastic section was written in the future tense and technically, therefore, was foretelling the future, although actually it was 'foretelling' the past from the point in time when the *Purāṇa* was composed. Projecting past events into the future was a claim to authority. The intention was to construct and conserve a past from the brahmanical perspective, but using the data of the *sūta*. The *kṣatriyas* were lauded because, even though some were of ambiguous origin, such as the Pūrus, they were said to have observed the brahmanical social code, the *varṇa-āśrama-dharma*, performed the *śrauta* (public rituals), and made lavish donations to the *brāhmaṇas.*

The *kṣatriya* genealogies were to be useful in later periods when claims were made to *kṣatriya* status by non-*kṣatriya* rulers. This is a contrast to pre-Gupta times when non-*kṣatriya* kings were accepted as virtually normal. Nevertheless, the *Purāṇas* established a flexible *kṣatriya* identity. Thus it is stated that in the period just prior to the Gupta, a king of Magadha will uproot the existing kings and establish other *varṇas* (castes) such as Kaivartas and Pulindas (both recognized low castes) as kings, and that he will uproot the *kṣatram* and create another *kṣatram*.[43] This is generally taken to mean *kṣatriya*, but could be a reference to *kṣatr* (power/supremacy/dominion).

Parallel to the *brāhmaṇa* authors of the *Purāṇas* were court poets and scholars, generally from the elite, and writing in Sanskrit and Prākrit, who introduced new genres of writing, which were not histories as such but incorporated some degree of historical tradition. Justifying the politics of those in authority by invoking actions from the past was an aspect of this change. This is also reflected in two historical plays by Viśākhadatta, the *Devicandragupta* and the *Mudrarākṣasa*.[44] The author was associated with the court, his grandfather having been a *sāmanta*—an intermediary who had received a grant of land from the king—and his father took the title of *mahārāja*, asserting greater status.

The date of the playwright is not certain, but he is generally thought to have lived in the Gupta period or soon thereafter. This is suggested by the contents of the first play, which unfortunately survives only in fragments. It concerns the defeat of Rāma Gupta in western India by the Śakas/Scythians who also take away his queen. This angers his younger brother who rescues the queen, eventually defeats the Śakas and has his brother assassinated, and comes to the throne

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[43] Ibid., 53.
[44] *Mudrarākṣasa*, ed. A. Hillebrandt (Breslau, 1912); and *Three Sanskrit Plays*, trans. M. Coulson (Harmondsworth, 1981).

as Candragupta II. The play appears to have been written to exonerate the actions of Candragupta II. The story is related in other texts as well.

The *Mudrarākṣasa* focuses on the important historical transition from the Nanda dynasty to the Maurya in circa 321 BC. The action involves complicated intrigue, but since the protagonists are ministers and advisers to the kings, the dialogue is often a comment on how the politics of the situation were viewed in terms of a later age looking back on an earlier one, but perhaps with an eye on its own times as well. Viśākhadatta was well read and familiar with sources that narrate events relating to the earlier period, such as the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya—a major work on political economy, whose author Kauṭilya is a protagonist in the play—various Buddhist and Jaina narratives in which he also features, and the *vaṃśānucarita* of the *Purāṇas*.

Initially *yajñas* (sacrificial rituals), in addition to propitiating the gods, were statements of status when performed on a lavish scale. In the Gupta period, and later with *yajñas* becoming less important, genealogical connections became a new form of legitimation. The *sūtas*, as earlier genealogists, gradually gave way to the *brāhmaṇas*, appropriating this source of controlling the past.

Genealogies and descent lists are indicators of linear time. Additions, subtractions, and spurious names which are normal to maintaining such lists do not affect the linearity. Linear time is further confirmed when there is mention of regnal years for members of a dynasty, or else the length of the dynasty is specifically stated. Historical chronology is also expressed in terms of eras, which occur in inscriptions. The two most frequently used are the Vikrama *samvat* of 57 BC and the Śaka *samvat* of AD 78. In the *Purāṇas*, time is also measured in cycles, as in the theory of the *yugas* which is described in detail.[45] Cycles are often dated on the position of constellations, as at the start of the Kaliyuga. The *vaṃśā nucarita* crosses the *yugas* from the Dvāpara to the Kaliyuga, with the Kurukṣetra war as the approximate time marker. Cosmological cyclic time is the larger frame. Within this, the descent groups and dynasties which measure time with reference to persons and events linked to *itihāsa* conform to a linear pattern of time. In a sense, linear time becomes a segment within the arc of the cycle.

The reconstruction of the past in the *vaṃśānucarita* section of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* is a reformulation of the data on the past, now made accessible to the newly emerging royal families. Incorporating it into the *Purāṇas* was a handy device to provide both authority and preservation. A new ruler seeking *kṣatriya* status would prefer to link himself to a Puranic lineage. The need for such a reordering of the past was doubtless also a reaction to the challenge of the contrasting reconstruction in the Buddhist tradition, and more particularly the Theravada tradition. The Puranic historical tradition avoids mentioning the version of events as given in heterodox sources. These were tied to a different

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[45] *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, I. 3.

ideological tradition. For example, in describing the emergence of political authority and government, brahmanical theory sought legitimacy through divine sanction in the appointment of a raja, whereas Buddhist sources negated divine intervention and ascribed authority to a social contract, in an effort to terminate conflict over the institution of family and of private property. This latter was seen as a solution to the fear of anarchy. It suggests an evolving diachronic view of history, and provides some clues to the differing nature of causality in the two traditions.

THE JAINA AND BUDDHIST HISTORICAL TRADITION

Perceptions arising from the *itihāsa-purāṇa* traditions were predictably different in the parallel Jaina and Buddhist writing, although the difference narrows in later times. The teachers of these religions, Mahāvīra and Gautama Buddha, were both historical persons of the Jñātrika and Śakya *gaṇa-saṅghas* (clan-based societies). This underlay the assumption of historicity in the Śramanic tradition. The traditional date for the death of Mahāvīra was 527 BC, and for the Buddha (referred to as the *mahāparinirvāṇa*) was 486/483 BC. There has been some debate about these dates among modern scholars, although the suggested alternatives have a margin of up to a century later. However, the chronology within the two traditions was generally consistent in using their respective chronologies.

The early texts of the Jaina tradition, such as the *ācāraṅga* and the *Kalpasūtra*, narrate episodes in the life of Jaina teachers,[46] encouraging an interest in biography as a genre, as well as the attempt to record the succession of Jaina pontiffs at major monasteries. A concern for chronology is also expressed in the use of the Vikram era of 58 BC and the Śaka era of AD 78. In critiquing brahmanical versions of the past, attempts were made by Jaina authors to retell current narratives of the past, demonstrating thereby the biases of other traditions, and incidentally incorporating its own in the retelling.

An early phase in viewing the history of the sects in the context of general history comes from Magadha and the middle Ganges plain, where the sect originated and its teachings were initially propagated. But more effective historical writing belongs to the later period after the eighth century AD. Much of this is located in western India where the Jainas had both a religious and a political presence. Characteristic of monastic sects were the *paṭṭāvalis*, recording the succession of important Elders of the Saṅgha, Order, as well as kings and merchants—the organizers of the sects and the patrons. The early texts, frequently written by monks, were in Prākrit, and gradually there was a change to using Sanskrit.

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[46] *Ācāraṅga*, ed. Walthur Schubring (Leipzig, 1910); and *Jaina Sutras*, ed. and trans. Hermann Jacobi (Oxford, 1884).

Buddhist texts, where they refer to the pre-Buddhist period, draw on some sources that were common to the *itihāsa-purāṇa* traditions. Subsequent to the establishment of Buddhism, history is determined by persons and events in relation to the Buddha and the Buddhist Saṅgha. Connections between political authority and the Buddhist Saṅgha, such as co-relating the succession of monastic Elders with the reign of kings, are a departure from the Puranic tradition. Whatever borrowing there might have been from any common source or from the Puranic tradition dwindles with the narrative of dynasties starting in about the sixth century BC. From this point on, the Puranic and the Sramanic traditions tend to diverge. The Buddhist tradition has a sharper understanding of the centrality of an historical perspective. The reasons can be many: the founder and the Elders so central to the narrative were historical figures; literacy meant not only writing and copying the Buddhist Canon but also commentaries and monastic chronicles, not to mention the biographies (some close to hagiographies) of the historical figures; the growth of sectarian fissions and differences of doctrine needing to be recorded; and information about the properties of the monasteries having to be maintained. Events were generally related to the central date, that of the *mahāparinirvāṇa*, the date of the death of the Buddha, calculated as 486/483 BC, although in one tradition from Sri Lanka there was a discrepancy of sixty years, with the date being 544 BC.

Early Buddhist texts were concerned with establishing the historicity of the Buddha, the history of the Saṅgha, Order, and the succession of Elders in various sects as they emerged from the initial teaching. The Buddhist narratives written by monks and by commentators also start with the history of the teaching in the middle Ganges plain and the emergence of the monastic order. Written in Pāli, a Sanskrit vernacular used extensively by early Buddhists, the teaching and initial history of the Saṅgha has come to be called the Pāli Canon. Parallel to this were the *vaṃśas*, the registers of lineages, succession lists, and chronicles. The earliest of these was the *Buddhavamśa*, which narrates the lives of the Buddhas who are believed to have preceded Gautama. Claiming continuity from earlier teaching, it uses the *puranas* as sources, this being the older oral tradition. Chronology becomes precise from the time of Gautama and this also separates him from the earlier Buddhas.

The Buddhist monastic chronicles of the Theravāda sect of Sri Lanka, the *Dīpavamsa* (fourth century AD) and the *Mahāvaṃsa* (fifth century AD), are the important histories. Starting in the eastern Ganges plain, they move to Sri Lanka, linking the history of the island with that of parts of the subcontinent through the Buddhist connection.[47] As chronicles, they have a definitive perspective: to defend the Mahāvihāra monastery of the Theravāda amidst the conflicts

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[47] *Dīpavamsa: An Ancient Buddhist Historical Record*, ed. and trans. Hermann Oldenberg (Berlin, 1879); and *The Mahāvamsa*, trans. Wilhelm Geiger (London, 1912).

of various Buddhist sects. They claim the earlier *Sinhalaṭṭhakathā-Mahāvaṃsa*, now extant, as a source. The tradition of monastic chronicles was continued into medieval times, the *Cūlavaṃsa* being a successor to the *Mahāvaṃsa*.

It is thought that the *Dīpavaṃsa* may have been initially written by nuns, since no author is mentioned and there is much that is said about nuns and convents. Buddhaghoṣa, writing in the fifth century AD, drew on the *Dīpavaṃsa* for his commentary, the *Samantapasādikā*. Mahānāma, the monk who wrote the *Mahāvaṃsa*, updated the narrative as he saw fit and addressed specific themes from the past. Sri Lanka had to be prepared for the arrival of the Buddhist mission. This was initiated by a fantasy of the Buddha flying to the island and back. Mahānāma's subsequent concerns were historical: narrating the peopling of the island with migrants from eastern India; the first Buddhist mission to Sri Lanka brought by the son of Aśoka Maurya which linked its history in some detail to that of the early Mauryas; the successive councils through which Theravāda Buddhism was contoured and dissident groups came into existence, and the role of the Elders in this process; and the evolving of the Mahāvihāra monastery to which he belonged as the centre for the Buddhist Saṅgha, its competition for patronage with the later Abhayagiri monastery, and the acrimonious relationship between the two in the context of the politics of royal patronage.

The last is a major agenda of the chronicle. The *Mahāvaṃsa* presents the chronology of the Elders and their links with royalty. Much is made of the epic role of a Sri Lankan king, Duṭṭagāmini, in forcing back south Indian rule to the mainland, and this gives a strong political intention to the text. A connection is also made between Sri Lankan royalty and the ancient solar lineage of Ikṣvāku, called Okkāka in Pāli, where the Śākya clan of the Buddha also had links with Ikṣvāku, as stated in the *Purāṇas*. The attempt was not only to prove the antiquity of the local royalty, but also perhaps to take it away from south Indian connections. The *Vaṃsatthappakāsinī* was a later commentary on the history narrated in these chronicles and this encouraged a continuing return to the earlier texts.

Both the *Dīpavaṃsa* and the *Mahāvaṃsa* recount the establishing of Theravāda monastic sects in Sri Lanka. The Buddhist Saṅgha, like most religious sectarian organizations, required patronage from its community of followers, and more importantly, from royalty. The history of kings became part of the history of the Saṅgha, and the interface between the two had political importance. There was, in effect, more than one Buddhist tradition setting out a history.

The Northern Buddhist tradition was different from the Theravāda, and had its own narratives about the past. Although some texts are in Prākrit, most are in Sanskrit and increasingly so. Some related to kings who had been patrons of the Saṅgha, as was the Mauryan emperor Aśoka who was the focus of the *Aśokā-vadāna*, the glorious deeds of Aśoka, and of the *Divyāvadāna*.[48] To demonstrate

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[48] John S. Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the* Aśokāvadāna (Princeton, 1983); and *Divyāvadāna*, ed. P. L. Vaidya (Darbhanga, 1959).

the authority of the Saṅgha, kings are depicted as complying with its demands or those of its Elder, except when they are wickedly hostile. The *Aśokāvadāna* depicts Aśoka initially as such, but on becoming a Buddhist, he mutates into an exemplar of a Buddhist monarch. The treatment of events is dominated by the king's relationship with the Saṅgha. The validation from history is both of the kingdom and the Saṅgha. The persons and events from the past in the Buddhist texts were generally different from those referred to in the *Purāṇas*, where Aśoka, for instance, is just a name in a king list. The *Divyāvadāna* narrates the spread of Buddhism to the north-west of the subcontinent, which became a major centre. Apart from Aśoka it also introduces the Kuṣāṇa king Kaniṣka as a patron. Historicity is suggested as, for example, in discussing the causes of the rise and decline of dynasties and the moral judgements that follow.

The historicity of the Buddha encouraged the writing of biography, and the earliest of the major biographies was the *Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghoṣa, written in the early centuries of the Christian era.[49] Emanating from the Northern Buddhist tradition, this was an attempt to narrate the early life of Buddha and thereby also to crystallize the legendary material associated with it. The span is from the Buddha's birth to his enlightenment, and the style is more of hagiography than of biography. It tends to be formulaic; nevertheless it may have spurred an interest in writing about the crucial events in the life of a king—the form that was to be taken by the historical *caritas* (biographies) in the period after circa AD 600. The format of the *Buddhacarita* probably contributed to creating the genre of biography—the *carita* in the subsequent period.

CONCLUSION

The *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition evolves from being an embedded tradition from which items are selected and used in formulating later historical traditions of the Puranic or Śramanic variety. The narratives selected are either endorsed or else contested by other traditions also claiming to represent the past. Borrowings from earlier texts are not arbitrary and come to have a functional role in the more visibly historical texts of the period subsequent TO AD 600, such as in the *caritas*, the inscriptional annals, and the *vaṃśāvalīs* (chronicles).

Structurally, the past was conceptualized in three phases. The first is a narrative of origins, which is largely formulaic and therefore probably not meant to be taken literally, but which provides indicators of status through the presence of deities, and includes pointers to what are regarded as important actions. This moves into the second phase which narrates the *vaṃśas* (lineages), referring in the main to chiefdoms, and claiming to provide the occasional ancestor to later kings. The representations of persons and events in the *Mahābhārata* and the

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[49] *The Buddhacarita*, ed. and trans. Edward Hamilton Johnston, 2 vols. (Delhi, 1972).

Rāmāyana often differ in Buddhist and Jaina versions, suggesting that the historicity of a particular version was less important than the projection of particular ideologies.

The last phase attempts historicity in the succession of dynasties and the kings within each dynasty, or the history of the Saṅgha as an equivalent focus of authority. This pattern suggests the influence of the *vaṃśānucarita* format, since the latter was a deliberate attempt to give a structure to the past and create an historical tradition. Genealogies become important and therefore can be fabricated, as they were earlier. The concept of *vaṃśa* (lineage) is crucial, referring as it does to descent and succession, as well as providing continuity from societies prior to kingship moving towards becoming kingdoms. The creation of the new *kṣatriyas*, as referred to in the *Purāṇas*, required genealogies. In theory, the observance of the normative social code is insisted upon. The highlighting of particular dynasties or individual kings differs considerably for this period in the Puranic and Sramanic sources, and is dependent on the politics of the relationship between the sect and the king. In the Sramanic tradition, the history of the Saṅgha has priority, and in some ways subsumes the history of the Elders, who for this tradition were the source of authority.

Political power, as reflected in these texts, has many foci, and therefore many forms of validation. There is a hint or a reference to a variety of confrontations— clan contestation, political factions at the courts, and sectarian competition. Chiefdoms as pre-state societies, with a premium on birth and kinship as arbiters of status, express claims to power and social legitimation in their own way. The coming of the state as a political form requires other inputs into the construction of the past, as is reflected in Buddhist historical writing, with its closeness to state forms and the appurtenances of the state. The royal court becomes the focus of an identity that binds the region. Its counterpart is the Saṅgha.

There is a consciousness of historical change through both the new genre of texts and in their contents, and this is related to historical needs. Historical change is implicit in the transition from chief to king, which was not an absolute dichotomy, but nevertheless registered a difference. A justification was required for this new identity, and a further validation from the past for the shift in form. This might perhaps be a partial explanation for why history came to be written in ways more familiar to us now, subsequent to the *vaṃśānucarita* of the *Purāṇas*.

The traditions shift to different categories of authors. The *sūtas* (bards) associated with the hero-lauds of the *dāna-stutis* of the *Ṛgveda* and the original composition of the epics, had chiefdoms as their primary context. This gives way to *brāhmaṇas*, such as the Bhṛgus, as authors and editors whose concern was to reorder the epics to convert them into texts promulgating the Vaiṣṇava Bhāgavata religion. These authors in turn give way to the *brāhmaṇa* authors of the *Purāṇas*, some of whom may have been Bhṛgus and thus provided continuity. None of these categories were court poets, and even the bards were itinerant and not attached to courts. The court poet as the author of historical writing was to

come later. Monks and scholars who were members of the Saṅgha had yet another perspective, in which the state had an interface with the Saṅgha.

Nevertheless there was a degree of networking among these groups, and particularly where a wider coverage of sources was required. Bards functioned as such in small polities and where the identities of clans remained an undercurrent, as indeed they still do in some parts of the subcontinent. The bifurcation becomes deeper if there is a distinction between the remembered oral tradition and the textual tradition. The *sūta* keeps the oral tradition, and his record need not be identical with the text, nor his mandate and his audience. The official version of the documents from the court could replace the popular version. The continuing importance of each was dependent on the patronage they received from various social groups. The ideology and agenda of the author has to be recognized. Where religious functionaries were the authors, ideology became written into the texts more firmly. Where they were attached as functionaries to the royal court, even when they were *brāhmaṇas*, their writing incorporated more of politics and the perspectives of courtly society.

Patrons change from chiefs to kings, and since this was an ongoing historical process it forms a continuous thread in the perception of the past. A marked difference is noticeable in Buddhist and Jaina historical writing, since in these texts patronage is dual: the king and the Saṅgha. Religion intervenes in the narrative of the historical, but the narrative is soon released from ritual texts, although in some cases its end purpose can be religious edification. The history, or attempted history, focuses on those in authority, whether political or religious, and an attempt is made to weave the two together. This is not the case with the earlier texts that have been discussed here, since the claim to historicity is not as urgent as in the Buddhist and Jaina traditions.

An historical tradition in early societies is seen as necessary by those who maintain that a tradition that comes from the past must have centrality in the present, by those who are in authority and whose aura increases if they can validate and legitimize themselves by a connection with the past, and by those who are dictating the parameters of identity. The historical tradition in early India was addressing these concerns.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

*c.*1400–1000 BC	*Ṛgveda*
*c.*400 BC–AD 200	*Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana*
*c.*200 BC–AD 200	*Ācāraṅgasūtra*
c. AD 200	*Aśokāvadāna*; *Divyāvadāna*
*c.*100	*Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghoṣa
*c.*300	*Dīpavaṃsa*
*c.*400	*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*

*c.*400	*Mahāvamsa* of Mahānāma
*c.*500	*Devicandragupta* and *Mudrarākṣasa* of Viśākhadatta

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Chapter 24

Inscriptions as Historical Writing in Early India: Third Century BC to Sixth Century AD

Romila Thapar

The linguistic paradox of early India is that Sanskrit, the linguistic parent of Middle Indo-Aryan, first appeared in inscriptions later than its own descendants (such as Prākrit). But inscriptions are textual records with varying functions requiring different languages spoken by different people. In nineteenth-century India they were initially listed under archaeology and came to be treated as artefacts and, at most, a source for dynastic succession and chronology. They were later recognized as important documents providing information on society and economy. Now we can recognize them additionally for the study of historical writing.

Inscriptions are of many kinds: royal proclamations, votive inscriptions recording gifts, eulogies of rulers, records of particular events, or legal documents pertaining to rights and obligations over land and such like. As with all categories of historical data, they reflect historical change. The context of a text involves asking many questions, such as: Who is the author? What is the intention of the text? Who is the intended audience? How does the language reflect history? And, where there is a change of language, what determines the choice? These questions can be asked of inscriptions.

Writing, whether pictorial or alphabetic, is a way of communicating. The earliest forms were the Harappan signs, engraved with special care on the small seals found in abundance at the city sites of the Indus civilization. To a lesser extent they occur on amulets and as graffiti on pots. It was assumed that the signs represented a language. The debate has centred on whether the script was logographic or alphabetic, and of course whether the language was Proto-Dravidian or Indo-Aryan, which were the two probable languages.[1] Attempts at decipherment in either language have so far not succeeded. More recently it has been suggested that communication was through signs, and that these signs should not be treated as a script—a view that only some scholars accept. The system of writing/

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[1] A. Parpola, *Deciphering the Indus Script* (Cambridge, 1994).

communication terminated with the decline of the Harappan cities around 1700 BC, and an entirely different phonetic system emerged a few centuries later in the form of Old Indo-Aryan, which had cognates with Old Iranian. This disjuncture suggests a language change in north-western India. Whatever the Harappan language may have been, the subsequent language was predominantly Indo-Aryan in northern India.

Language change is not an isolated phenomenon but is tied to other historical changes. Who uses which language and for what purposes is basic to understanding societies of the past, since there was no uniform use of an identical language for all occasions. This is interestingly reflected in early Indian inscriptions. Those up to the Christian era are generally in Prākrit (a widely used and varied vernacular form of Old Indo-Aryan), although Sanskrit was simultaneously being used for other purposes, such as in *brāhmaṇa* ritual. In the early first millennium AD there was a change to using Sanskrit in inscriptions which coincided with Sanskrit becoming the court language, although Prākrit continued to be a commonly used language.[2]

Scripts also evolved and changed over time. There were two scripts in use initially: *brāhmī*, which had some similarities with the southern Semitic script and remained the primary script, and *kharoṣṭhī*, derived from Aramaic current in Achaemenid Asia, which was limited to north-western India and Central Asia, and gradually declined in use. *Brāhmī* remained the main script, and consequently underwent considerable change. The change was not so marked to begin with, but became so after the mid first millennium AD. This was also in part because it was being adapted to a number of regional languages. It changed to such an extent that it gradually became impossible to read the earliest inscriptions. Attempts by a Sultan of Delhi in medieval times to have the Aśokan inscriptions read came to naught. Inscriptions that were nearly contemporary could be read, but the early scripts were an enigma.

The decipherment of *brāhmī* became a major challenge to Orientalist scholarship in India.[3] It was thought—quite correctly—that the early inscriptions would provide valuable information. William Jones, the preeminent Indologist of the late eighteenth century, suggested a common linguistic ancestry for Sanskrit and Greek. He read the reference to an Indian king, Sandrocottos, in a Greek text as the linguistic equivalent of the Sanksrit Candragupta. Although the context points to this being the first Mauryan king, some argued that it could be a reference to Candragupta of the Gupta dynasty, who ruled more than six centuries later. Historians are now of the view that only the first reading is viable.

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[2] Richard Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Pakrit, and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages* (Austin, 1998); and Ahmad Hasan Dani, *Indian Paleography* (Oxford, 1963).

[3] Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy*, 199.

Charles Wilkins and Henry Colebroke began with the medieval period inscriptions and tried to reconstruct the script in retrospect. A modicum of success came from this exercise. Some dates and an occasional name could be read. But the breakthrough came with James Prinsep, who focused on the Aśokan inscriptions. He argued that they did not seem to be in Sanskrit since double consonants were rare, and when he used a statistical method he noticed the repetition of a text on some of the pillars. Both Prinsep and Charles Lassen found some clues in the bilingual coins of the post-Mauryan Indo-Greek and Kṣatrapa rulers. Prinsep then turned to examining the brief votive inscriptions of donors at the much frequented Buddhist *stūpa* sites such as Sanchi. Here he noticed that most of the statements ended in the same three letters. These he guessed quite correctly were the signs for the genitive *sya* followed by 'gift of' (*dā-nam*). This began to unlock the decipherment.

The earliest edicts included phrases such as *devānaṃpiya piyadasi rāja hevaṃ āha*—'the beloved of the gods, the king Piyadasi, speaks thus'. This name 'Piyadasi' is not mentioned in the Puranic king lists, but occurs in Buddhist sources narrating the history of Sri Lanka. So it was first assumed that the reference was to a Sri Lankan king. It was a while before an inscription was discovered that confirmed the title of *devānaṁpiya*, as also *piyadasi*, as the personal name of Aśoka (written in Prākrit as Asoka).[4] The Puranic dynastic lists merely mention Aśoka as a name in the list of Mauryan kings, whereas in the Buddhist tradition he is the role model of the *cakravartin*, the universal monarch, the focus of many narratives. This is another pointer to the bifurcation in the Puranic and Buddhist historiographic traditions, which either ignored or contradicted what the other said.

The late nineteenth century was when many inscriptions began to be read and the variations in the script were recognized. The focus was mainly on those providing a reliable chronology, since many were dated. Mention of the ruling king made it possible to start reconstructing dynastic history, especially of the period subsequent to the Guptas when the *Purāṇas* ceased to carry dynastic information, but there was a substantial increase in inscriptions. The growing awareness of sources of power being other than ritual is evident from the deliberate drawing on the past and using it to legitimize the present. This was to become an important aspect of the data in inscriptions, quite apart from their information on the present.

The earliest deciphered inscriptions are the edicts of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka dating to the third century BC.[5] These edicts as royal proclamations are in three languages—Prākrit, Greek, and Aramaic—and in four scripts: *brāhmī*, *kharoṣṭhī*, Greek, and Aramaic. The largest number is in Prākrit with locations

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all over the subcontinent—from Mansehra in the north, to Girnar in the west, Dhauli in the east, and Yerragudi in the south.

The conversational tone and the informal contents of the edicts would have been inappropriate in Sanskrit, since Aśoka's subjects would have been mostly Prākrit-speaking. This is made apparent by the king mentioning that his officers were to read the royal orders to the public. This would imply that there may have been areas where literacy was not sufficient for the general public to read the edicts, although literacy in Prākrit among state officials, Buddhist monks, traders, and some others can be assumed. Regional differences of dialects, reflected even in words as common as *rājā* (chief/king), would only occur, as they do, if the language was widely spoken. Probably the edicts were sent out in the Māgadhi form of Prākrit current in the capital at Pāṭalipūtra, and local scribes and engravers may well have introduced local dialect usage.

That Prākrit was the most widely used language is evident from the linguistic features of the epigraphs indicating regional variations of dialects. Politically, the most important language was Māgadhi Prākrit, spoken in the area that was the nucleus of the emergent kingdoms and what became the heartland of the Mauryan empire—the middle Ganges plain. One of the interesting variations is that in Māgadhi, the 'r' is replaced by 'l'. Thus *rājā* is written as *lājā*. This replacement has a long history and was referenced in the Vedic corpus five centuries earlier as characteristic of the speech of the *asuras* or the *mlecchas*—barbarians who cannot speak Sanskrit correctly.[6] From the orthodox Sanskritic perspective, the language used by the emperor Aśoka was that of the barbarians, despite being the language of the royal edicts. The variant in central India and the west was often called the Ujjain dialect, the town of Ujjain being the hub, and that of the north-west was called Gandhāri Prākrit, so named after the north-western border area being called Gandhāra. The distinctions are reasonably apparent.

The Aśokan edicts, written in Aramaic, had incorporated some elements of Prākrit, possibly because of Prākrit speakers settled in that area mixing with Aramaic speakers. An Aśokan bilingual Aramaic–Greek inscription indicates the presence of a Greek-speaking population, which is further supported by translations of the Major Rock Edicts from Prākrit into Greek. These become epigraphic cross-references to events in Hellenistic west Asia—an inference made more firm by the mention in one edict of five Hellenistic kings who were contemporaries of Aśoka.[7] The type of Greek used was generally the *koine*, which was the *lingua franca* of the Hellenistic world, registering regional variation, and it therefore parallels the use of Prākrit in India.

The five Hellenistic kings are mentioned as follows: *'atta aṃtiyoge nāma yonala[ja] palaṃ cā tenā aṃtiyogenā cattalī 4 lājana tulamaye nāma aṇtekine*

    [6] *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 3. 2. 1. 23.
    [7] XIII Major Rock Edict; Romila Thapar, *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* (Oxford, 1961), 40 ff.

nāma makā nāma alikyaṣudale nāma… ('where reigns the Yona king named Antiochus and beyond that Antiochus four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magas, and Alexander…').[8] The first four have been identified with certainty, but the fifth could be either Alexander of Epirus or Alexander of Corinth. This reference to the yonarājās has come to be treated as a bedrock of ancient Indian chronology, since the dates of these kings as contemporaries of Aśoka are well established. The certainty of this evidence supersedes that made by William Jones in equating Sandrocottos with Candragupta Maurya.

What is remarkable about these edicts, apart from the languages and forms that were used, is that the king touches on many facets of Indian life and history that were being constantly acted upon in later centuries. Without saying so directly, there was much that had its genesis in the ideas and attitudes propounded in these texts. In more senses than one, the edicts can be regarded as the introduction to the historical traditions of early India.

The Greek and Aramaic versions are not translations but renderings of some of Aśoka's thoughts from the Prākrit edicts relating to his concern with social ethics. As such, they add to the meaning of some of the Prākrit usage in words such as *eusebeia* in Greek for *dhamma* in Prākrit, meaning virtue or piety, with no necessary connection to Buddhism; and this is rendered in Aramaic as *qsyt* (truth) and *dāta* (law and piety), hinting at links with Zoroastrianism. There was possibly an attempt to relate these concepts to the cultural idioms of those speaking non-Prākrit languages. The Greek *diatribe* is the same as the Prākrit *pāsaṃda*, referring to philosophical schools, and it too changes its meaning in later periods to mean those teaching false doctrines. These inscriptions are from areas ceded to the Mauryas by the Seleucids. The presence of these languages points to populations speaking various non-Indian languages.

The edicts emphasize social ethics as defined by Aśoka and, although they are not identical with Buddhist philosophy, they nevertheless carry something of an imprint. The Major Rock Edicts (MRE), a set of fourteen, and an additional two Separate Edicts (SE), were inscribed on rock surfaces in various parts of his domain where people gathered. These were issued in the years after his twelfth regnal year (*dbādasa vāssābhisittena*). After a break of about a dozen years, another set of seven edicts was issued inscribed, this time, on pillars, some specially constructed, at important locations in the Ganges plain. These latter are a retrospective where he reviews what he has achieved, and to that extent they are a comment on his past actions. He is careful about recording his regnal years, and the edicts therefore carry a chronological narrative of his thought. Frequent mention is made of *purā* (past times), or more specifically *atikkātam aṃtaram bahuni vāssastāni*, when kings indulged in pleasures that have now declined (MRE I, IV). Some activities are to continue until the end of the universe (*samvaṭṭa kappā*).

⁸ Bloch, *Les Inscriptions d'Asoka*, 130.

Aśoka refers to his domain as *vijaye*, that over which he rules (MRE XIV). There are friendly references to his western neighbours, the five Hellenistic kings, mentioned by name (MRE XIII). There are references to various peoples within the imperial territories: the Yonas, Kāmbojas, Nābhakas, Nābhapanktis, Bhojas, Pitinikas, Āndhras, and Pārindas; and in the south, the Cholas, Pāṇḍyas, Keralaputras, and Satyaputras. These latter seem not to have been kingdoms as there are no names of kings, and the suffix *putra* is often used for a clan. This is a contrast with the Hellenistic rulers.

Mention is also made of the forest peoples—the *aṭavikas.* It is said that the king is like their father and feels for them, and that they will be forgiven by the king in so far as they can be forgiven. But what they are to be forgiven for is not stated (SE II). Presumably forest-dwellers were resisting the encroachment into forests by kingdoms desirous of cutting forests and converting them into culti-vable land to enhance the revenue of the state. This is implied in some of the remarks on forest tribes in the *Arthaśāstra*—the text of political economy thought to be of this period.[9] The confrontation between the state and forest-dwellers was a constant one, resolved either by the latter ceasing to be clan enti-ties and becoming law-abiding peasants and castes and changing their way of life, or by some moving deeper into the recesses of the forest. It is surprising that in an otherwise humanistic document there should be such threats to the forest-dwellers.

The imperial administration seemed less concerned with reaching out to the chiefdoms of the south, and does not translate the edicts into Tamil—the language widely used there. The *brāhmī* script could have been adapted to Tamil if it had been thought important to communicate locally. This was done soon after at the initiative, it would seem, of local merchants, some identifying cargo, and others recording their gifts to Jaina monks and nuns, among other things.[10] There are elements of Prākrit and some Prākritisms in the Tamil-brāhmī inscrip-tions, again suggesting Prākrit speakers in the area. There are co-relations between the references to clans and chiefs in these short inscriptions and in references in the Tamil anthologies of poetry of about the same date.

It is puzzling that there is little reference to the Buddhist institutions such as the *Saṅgha* (Order) or *vihāras* (monasteries) or worship at *stūpas*, the tumulus built to mark a relic, in these southern inscriptions, especially when compared with the earliest inscriptions of Sri Lanka, written in Prākrit but recognizable as the local Siṅhala Prākrit, which refer almost exclusively to Buddhism. According to the Buddhist chronicles of the early history of India and Sri Lanka, the *Dīpavaṃsa* and the *Mahāvaṃsa*, Buddhist missionaries came by sea from north India, bypassing the south, and this may be one explanation. Equally puzzling is why

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[9] *Arthaśāstra*, 2.17.
[10] Iravatham Mahadevam, *Early Tamil Epigraphy from the Earliest Times to the Sixth Century A.D.* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003).

Jaina missions did not continue their journey from south India to Sri Lanka. If there was a Buddhist mission to Sri Lanka backed by Aśoka, this may have dissuaded the Jainas.

Judging by the language of the inscriptions, Prākrit was widely used for almost four centuries from the Mauryan period. Dynasties of the immediately post-Mauryan period issued a variety of inscriptions in Prākrit. It was also used in coin legends of the Sātavāhanas, Indo-Greeks, and Indo-Scythians. This is not surprising at a time when trade was in the ascendant, encouraging bilingualism. Royal inscriptions recorded donations to Buddhist monasteries and to *brāhmaṇas.* The inscription was a statement of status as well as a record of a pious gift as, for example, in a substantial investment by a member of the Kṣatrapa royal family in two weavers' guilds, the interest of which was to be used for purchasing robes for monks (EI, 8, 82 ff.) or the planting of 32,000 coconut trees for a congregation of monks, or the lavish donations to *brāhmaṇas*, including providing some with wives (EI, 8, no. 10. 78 ff.).

These impressive royal grants recorded at Nasik are juxtaposed with the much smaller grants from householders and their families, female ascetics, a fisherman and his kinsfolk, and small land owners (EI, 8, 55 ff.), all for the Buddhist Saṅgha. Thus, whereas royalty patronized both the Buddhists and the Vedic Brāhmaṇas, the ordinary folk at this time were inclined to make donations to the Buddhist Saṅgha.

An innovation in royal inscriptions was the inclusion of a brief biography of a ruler in an inscription from western India, as well as in another somewhat longer autobiographical statement from a king of Kaliṅga in the east, both issued at about the same time. Gotami Balasiri, a Sātavāhana Queen, refers to the achievements of her son Siri Satakaṇi Gotamiputa (EI, 8. 60 ff.). The reigning king took the title of Vasithiputa Siri Pulamāyi, where Vasithiputa is the Prākrit for the Sanskrit Vasiṣṭhiputra. The other name, Pulamāyi, does not appear to be of Indo-Aryan origin. The use of bilingual coins in Tamil and Prākrit by the Sātavāhanas would suggest some component of Dravidian speakers. A possible Dravidian etymology could be *puliñan* or *puliyan*, forest-dwellers or mountaineers (DED 3547, 3548), and may also have provided the root for the Sanskrit name Pulinda, referring to such people. Whereas he is referred to as *rāño,* Gotamiputra is given the title of *rājarāño*, king of kings, later to take the form of *mahārājādhirāja*. Was the Sātavāhana royalty a local clan that rose to power? Gotamiputa is said to have revived the glory of the Sātavāhana dynasty (*sātavā hanakulayaśapatithāpana*) by defeating the Yavanas and rooting out the Khakharāta clans. He also stopped the contamination of the four *varṇas* (castes), as required by the orthodox brahmanical social code—a phrase that had become more formulaic than reflective of social observance.

Conquests and support of the caste organization were to be continuing features of kingship. Nevertheless it is also recorded, as was often to be so, that Gotamiputra was patron of the Saṅgha, Order of Buddhist monks, who in

theory were opposed to caste organization. Gifts and grants given separately to Śramana (Buddhist and Jaina) and to *brāhmaṇa* grantees were a common practice, and were to remain so until grants to Buddhist and Jaina recipients declined.

The unusual Hathigumpha inscription from Orissa is a brief autobiography of the early career of Khāravela, the Cedi ruler of Kaliṅga (EI 20.71 ff.). It is virtually a year-by-year account of his achievements in early life. The location of the inscription is near a Jaina centre, perhaps because the king was a Jaina. Khāravela refers to conflict with the Sātavāhanas over territory in the Deccan. He also refers to the Yavana-rājā Dimita—probably the Indo-Greek king Demetrius—whose presence in central India is mentioned in other sources, and who refers to himself in his coins as Dime[tra] in *kharoṣṭhī*. Other conflicts included campaigns against the kingdoms of south India, and closer to home against those of the middle Ganges plain.[11] He takes an interest in the compiling of Jaina texts, doubtless on the model of what was being done in the Buddhist monasteries at the time, and which was to give rise to an historical tradition. Most of the place names that he mentions have been identified. Such inscriptions were precursors to the *praśasti* form, now becoming a part of inscriptional style referring to the ancestry and activities of particular rulers in the form of a eulogy.

The Hathigumpha inscription introduced a number of features that were to become hallmarks of inscriptions in the later period. The opening section has statements on the king's origins. He refers to himself as *airena*, which could be the descendent of Ila/Ilā, a lineage ancestor/ancestress from the Puranic tradition. His own lineage, he states, is that of the Mahāmeghavāhana, which in the Jaina tradition is a particularly illustrious lineage, and is linked to the Cedi descent group claimed by a number of dynasties, such as the Kalacuri and the Haihaya of central India at this time. As the term Kaliṅgādhipati indicates, he regards himself as the lord of Kaliṅga, of substantial importance in eastern India.

His claim to a Cedi connection marks a significant historiographical point. The Cedis were one of the sixteen major states of northern India in Buddhist sources. In the genealogical lists of the *Purāṇas* they are said to belong to the Yādava lineage. But Khāravela's claim doubtless comes from Jaina sources and is prior to the construction of descent groups in the *Purāṇas*, since these would date to the early centuries AD. The comparison of Khāravela to Vena is also of interest. It is based on the myth of the first king, Vena, being a great king but opposed to brahmanical orthodoxy, and therefore killed by the *brāhmaṇas*. Khāravela refers to his consecration as the *mahābhiṣeka*, drawing attention to the description in the Vedic corpus. Claim to conquering the Rathika and the Bhoja

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[11] Dines Chandra Sircar, 'Problems of the Yuga Purana', in id., *Studies in Yugapurana and Other Texts*, ed. Swarajya Prakash Gupta (Delhi, 1974), 1–19.

goes back to a mention in Aśokan inscriptions. The reference to the Nandas of Magadha is to the pre-Mauryan dynasty that is said to have constructed a water course in Kaliṅga dated to the year 103 of the Nanda era. Khāravela is anxious to make connections with earlier rulers and events.

The most widespread use of Prākrit was in votive inscriptions at Buddhist and Jaina sacred sites. The donations are recorded at *stūpa* sites, on icons, and on pottery. Rulers are not donors in significant numbers, nor are they given grandiloquent titles. The larger number of donors are ordinary people of varied professions, whose donations are either individual or often as a family or community group. The record of the donation usually ends in the phrase *sya dānam*, 'the gift of…'.

The most striking of these is the much discussed Piprahwa Buddhist Vase Inscription of about the late third century BC.[12] A vase was donated by a family to a Buddhist *stūpa*, and the claim made in the inscription is that it contained the relics of the Buddha: *iyam salīla nidhane budhasa bhagvate sākiyanam.* It echoes the story in the Buddhist texts that the relics of the Buddha were divided between the clans that revered him, and a *stūpa* was built over each collection. Is this intended as epigraphical evidence of that story, and an attempt to give it historicity? The problem remains as to how such an important relic came into the hands of an obscure family. There is an echo of this in the Aśokan edict at Ahraura in the sentence that states *maṃca buddhase salīle āloḍhe*, referring to raising the relics of the Buddha. The worship of a bodily relic after cremation would be anathema to *brāhmaṇas*, for whom death was a source of impurity.

From the second century BC to the third century AD there is a flood of votive inscriptions recording donations made by many people for the building and adornment of Buddhist *stūpas*, and occasionally as records on the pedestals of Jaina icons. Such inscriptions are important to the reconstruction of the history of Buddhism, which by this time was split into many sects. Apart from mentioning the name, family, and occupation of the donor, the place of origin, the nature of the donation, and sometimes the sect to which the donor belonged, the ruling king is occasionally mentioned. The title significantly continues to be a form of *rājā* and nothing more grandiose. In the construction of a pavilion by a perfumer, the list of donors includes the father, mother, wife, brothers, daughters, daughters-in-law, grandson, kinsmen, and friends.[13] In one inscription the descent of five generations is listed by name.[14] The phrase *sanātimitabadhava* covers kinsmen and friends and those in any way connected.

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[12] Luder's list, no. 931, *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 10; and Fredrik Barth, 'The Inscription on the Piprahwa Vase', *Indian Antiquary*, 36 (1907), 117 ff.

[13] N. J. Francis, *A Source Book of the Early Brahmi Inscriptions of Amaravati* (Shimla, India, forthcoming), no. 224.

[14] Bharhut Pillar Inscriptions in Luder's list, no. 687, *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 10.

A group of inscriptions from Bhattiprolu have their own interest.[15] They are paleographically close to Aśokan *brāhmī* and are therefore dated to about the early second century BC. Three are relic caskets with inscriptions on the rim or the lid, which was to become a fairly common practice when interring the relics of the Elders of the monastery. But in one case there is another claim that the casket contains the relics of the Buddha. It would seem that relic worship had become so important that claims of the relics being those of the Buddha were not questioned. Relics are also regarded as proof of the historicity of the person. Reference is made to a *gothi*, a community of Buddhists, who are named, and were obviously persons of local importance, some officials and some others, who gave various objects to be included in the donation. Community donations meant that segments of the monument could be constructed through such donations and acknowledged separately, unlike royal donations which often consisted of the monument itself. The gift of a woman donor is specifically mentioned, along with the fact that she came from Nandapura.

The Buddhist *stūpa* at Amaravati has a history of votive inscriptions starting in the late third century BC and continuing for five hundred years, indicating that it remained a major site of worship for that length of time. Here again the patronage comes mainly from the community, and from monks and nuns who constitute about a third of the donors, with a tiny fraction of royal donations.[16] The royal donations are from women of the Ikṣvāku family since they tended to be the major royal patrons of Buddhism, whereas the men more frequently supported the rituals of Vedic sacrifices. References to the rulers are in part to give an indication of the date, and in part to provide an association with the male donor of the royal family. Thus a slab showing in low relief the worship of the Bodhi tree carries the statement that it refers to *rājño gotamiputre sri yajna [sa]takarnasya*, the king Gotamiputra Sri Satakarṇi.[17] Another inscription by a *gahapati* (householder), mentions the year of the *rāño vāsithīputa sami siri pulumāvi*, the king Vasiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvi.

In neighbouring Nagarjunakonda there is a continuation of votive inscriptions at this major Buddhist site, and again they are in the Prākrit language and the *brāhmī* script.[18] The inscriptions are of the Ikhaku/Ikṣvāku dynasty which succeeded the Mauryas in that region. The patrons were mainly the queens and their kinswomen. The wives of important clansmen and officers took the title of their husbands; thus the wife of the *mahātalāvara* was referred to as the *mahā talāvarī*. The king is said to be an *asamedhayājiśa*, a performer of the *aśvamedha*. The Ikṣvāku royal family was taking no chances and was supporting both religious systems—Buddhism and Vedic Brahmanism. The kings are described as great patrons, who not only performed a variety of Vedic sacrifices, but also gave

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[15] *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 2, 323.
[16] See Francis, A Source Book of the Early Brahmi Inscriptions of Amaravati.
[17] Ibid., no. 159.   [18] *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 20, 1–37.

plentifully in gold, cows, and ploughs—the gifts traditionally mentioned in Vedic texts, and usually in exaggerated quantities. It is unclear whether ploughs refer to land, but possibly not at this stage, or else it would have been singled out for special mention. At the same time there are other inscriptions that refer to Buddhist texts and teaching such as the *Nikāyas*, going back to an earlier period. Curiously there is no disapproval of animal sacrifices as in the earlier Pāli Buddhist Canon.

Buddhist sites of *stūpas* and *vihāras* were located in every part of the subcontinent. Many considerations led to the choice of a site. There could be an existing sacred place that went back to prehistoric times. The more obvious of these were the sites of the megalithic cultures such as Amaravati, which was appropriated by a large Buddhist structure engulfing the earlier one, but the sacredness of which became an historical continuity. This was a process that continued throughout Indian history, with Hindu temples built at the site of Buddhist *caityas* (halls of worship), as at Ter and Chezarla, or Muslim mosques built on Hindu temples, as at Delhi and Ajmer. The inscriptions, however, do not refer to the taking over of such sacred spaces.

Alternatively, the location may have been on a trade route. This is evident in the conjoining of commercial centres and monastic sites, and the rarity of monastic sites in unapproachable wildernesses. The participation of monks in exchange and commerce has been the subject of extensive study.[19] This is also evident in the routes going from northern India to central Asia, peppered with Buddhist Prākrit inscriptions in *kharoṣṭhī*, with the oasis towns of Central Asia being the habitat of Buddhist monasteries.

Prākrit inscriptions were not entirely concerned with Buddhist votive gifts. Some refer to other situations. Among the more interesting is a pillar inscription dedicated to Viṣṇu, the Puranic deity who was becoming popular at the turn of the Christian era.[20] The pillar was established by Heliodora, the son of Diya/ Dion, a native of the city of Takṣaśila or Taxila in the north-west and who describes himself as a Yona/Yavana, the term used for Greeks and west Asians. He is the ambassador of the *mahārāja* Amtalikita/Antalkidas to the *rājan* Kāsiputa. The pillar is his declaration of being a follower of the Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa cult—one of the many forms of the worship of Viṣṇu. It is worth noticing that he refers to his king as a *mahārāja*, whereas the local Indian king is simply a *rājan*, in keeping with the current Indian tradition.

Among the last of the important inscriptions in Prākrit was the group found at Andau in Kathiawar and date to the early second century AD. Issued during the reign of Rudradāman, three generations of his ancestors are named—information that was becoming common in inscriptions. The date is given as the year 52,

[19] Gregory Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks* (Honolulu, 1997).
[20] Luder's list, no. 669; Besnagar Garuda Inscription, in *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 10, 63 ff.

India *c.* AD 150.

but the era is not mentioned. If it was issued in the currently popular Śaka era it would work out to AD 130, which would be in agreement with the paleography. The inscriptions are records of a group of funeral monuments of a family, and appear to have a Jaina association.

Buddhist and Jaina sectarian literature was still largely in Pāli and Prākrit. The inscriptions would suggest that public discourse was associated with Prākrit, which was the language of state administration as well as sectarian teachings. As a language of public discourse over such a vast area, regional differences were inevitable, and continued to be recorded from the time of the Aśokan inscriptions.

Apart from Siṅhala Prākrit in Sri Lanka, Prākrit also had a substantial presence to the north of the subcontinent in central Asia, with inscriptions in *kharoṣṭhī* and *brāhmī*. Among the many routes from India to central Asia, the Karakorum Highway (touching on Gilgit, Chitral, and Hunza) was the location of innumerable short inscriptions in Prākrit mentioning names, votive gifts, and prayers associated with Buddhism. Prākrit travelled along the Silk Route from Khotan eastwards to Miran and further to Loulan, where inscriptions in *kharoṣṭhī* date to the first century AD. Inscriptions come largely from the oasis towns along the trade routes and, judging by their numbers, Prākrit was used by traders and Buddhist monks, and thus was doubtless known to those who lived in these towns and interacted with both. At the political level, Kuṣāna administration of the early centuries AD would have furthered its use, with the Kuṣāna kingdom spreading across western central Asia and much of northern India. One can perhaps speculate that the flexibility of Prākrit made it more acceptable to speakers of other languages. Given the presence of Prākrit elements in central Asian languages such as Bactrian, Khotanese, Tokharian, and more particularly Sogdian, which was the *lingua franca*, the use of the language was not limited to Indians settled in that area.

There are, therefore, many reasons for the extensive use of Prākrit. State administration, wishing to communicate with a range of people and not just the elite, made Prākrit the language of polity; as the language of merchants and artisans it was tied to trade that was crucial to the economy of the time; both Buddhism and Jainism, which had a considerable following, used Prākrits, including texts that dealt with the past; and the extensive donations to *stūpas* and *vihāras* were from the *upāsakas* (lay followers) who were Prākrit speaking, and among them women were conspicuous. The Prākrits evolved from Indo-Aryan and, with their regional divergence, reflected a linguistic diversity. From the third century BC to the second century AD, Prakrit was the language of the cosmopolitan discourse of the south Asian region and its neighbourhood, in virtually every direction.

This situation underwent a distinctive historical change in the early centuries AD when Prākrit was gradually replaced by Sanskrit as the language of public discourse. With all the activity involving Prākrit and its preeminence in

epigraphs, one wonders at the absence of inscriptions in Sanskrit, since it was regarded as the preeminent ritual language of early India and of early literature. Its appearance in inscriptions began tentatively in the early centuries AD. The well-known Bala inscription commemorates the establishing of a statue and monastery at Sarnath at the instance of a Buddhist member of the Saṅgha, claiming that it was on the spot where the Buddha himself used to stroll.[21] This was the inventing of a tradition.

An inscription in the Mathura region used Prākrit, but veered close to Sanskrit linguistic forms.[22] This has been labelled Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit. The inscription commemorates the setting up of an image of a *bodhisattva*, a Buddha to be, by the daughter of a local *mahārāja*, and is dated to the 23rd year of the Kuṣāna king Kaniṣka. Another inscription of a second king Kaniṣka gives the day, month, and year, again in an unknown era—possibly the Śaka era of AD 78. The king takes elaborate royal titles, culminating in *mahārājasa rājātirājasa devaputrasa kaisarasa,* the great king, the king of kings, the son of the deity, the *kaisara*—indeed a far cry from the simple *rājā* of earlier inscriptions.[23] The use of these titles has been debated. Their frequent occurrence in the north-west was perhaps the influence of Roman imperial titles, where *kaisara* may be a version of Caesar, and *devaputra* suggests the Chinese 'son of heaven'. The Kuṣāna kingdom had transactions with both the Roman and Chinese empires. Other than adopting a fashion, it was an indicator of a change in the perception of kingship, where the king was now a far greater focus of authority and power than had been the earlier *rājā*.

The use of a Sanskritized Prākrit is evident in inscriptions connected with what were to emerge as Puranic deities.[24] An inscription from Ayodhya of the Suṅga period records the building of a shrine by a person sixth in descent from the *senāpati* (commander of the army) Puṣyamitra.[25] In literary sources, the *senā pati* (commander) Puṣyamitra is said to have usurped the Mauryan throne and founded the Suṅga dynasty. As a good *brāhmaṇa* he would have given preference to the use of Sanskrit, however bowdlerized, and performed the *aśvamedha* as stated in the inscription. The publicity given to the performance of Vedic rituals in association with emerging kingship at this time would have been qualitatively different from the same rituals being performed by the chief of the clan in earlier centuries. A major factor would have been that the wealth expended on the ritual would now have been greater. The concept of wealth was slowly beginning to include land, which had not been the case earlier.

The first inscription in Sanskrit of a reasonably good quality, which in a sense turned public discourse from Prākrit to Sanskrit, was that of Rudradāman, the *mahākṣatrapa* of western India. It was issued in the Śaka era of 72, the

[21] *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 17, 173 ff.		[22] Mathura Inscription, ibid., vol. 28, 42 ff.
[23] Ara inscription of Kanishka II, ibid., vol. 14, 130 ff.
[24] Gosundi inscription, ibid., vol. 16, 25 ff.		[25] Ibid., vol. 20, 57 ff.

equivalent of AD 150, and engraved on the same rock as the set of Aśokan edicts at Girnar in Kathiawar.[26] The rock marked an entry into the valley that had been dammed by the Mauryan administration to create the Sudarshan lake, presumably as a source of irrigation. Because it describes the restoration of the lake after it had been destroyed during a fierce storm, the inscription is located where the original edict of Aśoka was engraved. The inscription mentions that the dam was built by *mauryasya rajnāh candraguptasya rāṣṭriyena vaiśyena Puṣ yaguptena karitam*, Candagupta Maurya's governor, the *vaiśya* Puṣyagupta. Subsequently, after another storm, it was restored by *aśokasya mauryasya te yavanarājena tuṣāsphena adhiṣṭhaya*, Asoka's administrator, the *yavanarāja* Tuṣā-śpa, and the current breach was restored by his own governor, Suviśākha. Barring the first, the names suggest that Kathiawar may have been a borderland for the Iranians and Parthians. It is impressive that an event of the fourth century BC was being recalled in the second century AD, and was to be remembered later still. He makes a particular point of stating that the restoration of the dam did not require forced labour or extra taxes, since the finances from the treasury were sufficient and the administrator Suviśākha was an upright man and not susceptible to corruption.

The *praśasti* (eulogy) on Rudradāman mentions his father, Jayadāman, and grandfather, the better-known Caṣṭana. He acquired the title of *mahākṣatrapa* through his conquests in the area and makes a point of referring to defeating the Yaudheyas who claimed to be *kṣatriyas*. Presumably this referred to the Puranic use of the term *kṣatriya* as the clans of old. He defeated Satakarṇi the Sātavā-hana, but let him off because of a close relationship. He donates cows to *brāhmaṇas*, which would have brought him the support of the brahmanical orthodoxy. In listing the characteristics of a king he mentions some of the requirements of a state system as given in texts on political economy, such as the army and the treasury. It is also noticeable that, although the Kuṣāṇas were taking grandiose titles, Rudradāman refers to both the Maurya kings merely as *rājās*. The latter part of the inscription is more conventional in describing his good looks and the number of *svayamvaras* where he won the hand of many a princess.

A striking question is why a *mahākṣatrapa* (literally the great *satrap*), whose title indicates that he was not a local ruler, should use Sanskrit for his inscriptions. Prākrit was still commonly used, and the earlier inscription of Aśoka at Girnar was in Prākrit. Was he making a claim that, although of alien stock, he was not a *mleccha*, and that his status was as good as that of any other ruler? Or was it becoming fashionable to use Sanskrit at court to demarcate the members of the court from others, and he therefore chose it for his inscriptions as well?

Inscriptions in Sanskrit now began appearing, but what is surprising is that it took so long for it to become the language of inscriptions. The centrality of

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[26] Ibid., vol. 8, 42 ff.; and Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy*, 89.

Prākrit in state administration declined in the early first millennium AD and was gradually replaced by Sanskrit, which became the language of court and administration from the mid first millennium AD. This, in a sense, also liberated it from being essentially the language of ritual. Texts exploring knowledge, such as those on mathematics, medicine, astronomy, and creative literature, had already begun to adopt Sanskrit. To state that Sanskrit was the refined language and Prākrit a natural language was to create a hierarchical relationship between the two. The inferiority of Prākrit is strikingly set out in the dramas of these times, where upper-caste men spoke Sanskrit—all except the *viduṣaka*, the *brāhmaṇa* who provided comic relief—whereas the women and lower-caste men spoke Prākrit.

The mid first millennium AD also witnesses some changes in calligraphy within the *brāhmī* script. Whereas in post-Aśokan times there were curving strokes that went downwards, these were now discarded and, instead, there was a heavy impression at the top of each letter which has led to its being called 'box-headed *brāhmī*'. In the southern scripts, the tendency was to give the letters more rounded forms. The intention was to state a change, and by the seventh century the change was established.

Within the hegemony of Indo-Aryan culture, Prākrit had to give way to Sanskrit. The change may have been affected by some other factors as well. A few of the early Hybrid Sanskrit inscriptions are linked to the emerging worship of Puranic deities, in particular Śiva and Viṣṇu. Some inscriptions from the courts of rulers regarded as foreign, such as the Kṣatrapas, were replacing the earlier use of Prākrit. Was the use of Sanskrit a method of identifying with the orthodox against the earlier patronage to the heterodox sects, particularly if one was not of the upper caste oneself? But the latter were also using a Hybrid Sanskrit, and why they were doing so is in itself a question that needs an answer. Was the legitimizing of kingship more accessible through brahmanical rituals? By the rules of the normative social codes—the *Dharmaśāstras*—Rudradāman would have been a *mleccha*. In the previous period such rules were less adhered to, but now they became a part of the play of political power.

There may have been considerations in the choice of language in northern and western India, but in the Deccan and south India there was a difference. The use of a mix of Prākrit and Sanskrit continued until later than in the north, up to the fourth or fifth centuries AD. In some cases the pattern that emerged was one in which data on the king is given in Sanskrit, but the grant and its details are in Prākrit.[27] This, it would seem, was harking back to an historical model, since by this time Tamil, rather than Prākrit, would have been the more convenient language for recording the details of the charter. The local languages began to replace Prākrit by about the seventh century AD, when some sections of the inscriptions could be written in the regional language. With grants to religious

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[27] Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy*, 91.

beneficiaries there is much less distinction of language, and both Buddhists and *brāhmaṇas* received their grants in charters written either in Prākrit or Sanskrit, or sometimes with different sections in different languages.

The efflorescence of Sanskrit as the language of the court and of inscriptions was well established by the Gupta period. The best known is the retrospective pillar inscription at Allahabad.[28] It is regarded as an exemplar of the *praśasti* or eulogy, and was probably issued by Samudragupta's son, Candragupta II, and dates to the fourth century AD. Samudragupta is given the full imperial title of *mahārājādhirāja*: by this time even lesser rulers were taking extraordinarily grand titles, many of which were, of course, hyperbole. *Praśastis* refer back to dynastic origins, particularly where deities are involved, but there is a distinction between what is exaggerated in formulaic ways and that which is more historical. Conquests over kingdoms and over chiefdoms are listed. The latter seem to have been politically more important than is conceded by modern historians. We are told that the composition was the work of court poets, and the name of Hariṣena is mentioned.

The location of the inscription raises many questions. It is engraved on the pillar erected by Aśoka and inscribed with his pillar edicts in Prākrit; in fact, it is the one moved in later centuries to Allahabad. Apart from the edicts and a couple of other Aśokan inscriptions, it also carries this *praśasti* as well as a Persian inscription giving the lineage of Jahangir. The inscriptions date to three different millennia and are in three different languages. Why was Samudragupta's *praśasti* engraved on this pillar? If Aśokan *brāhmī* could still be read in the Gupta period, which is possible, the message of the Gupta inscription, extolling military conquest, contradicted that of Aśoka endorsing non-violence. Was it an attempt to denigrate Aśoka and to show Samudragupta as the great conqueror? But that might have been more effective on a separate and more imposing pillar. Was the Aśokan message seen as a Buddhist discourse which needed to be overwritten? Or was it, on the contrary, an attempt at historical continuity evoking the legitimacy of the Mauryan Emperor?

Attempts were made in Gupta art to emulate some Mauryan forms, especially in the capitals of the pillars.[29] Such attempts at historical continuity also led to relocating and using Aśokan pillars from later Sultanate times, especially during the reign of Firuz Tughlaq. There is a curious political ambiguity in the placement of all the inscriptions. The puzzle is that in the brahmanical historical tradition, often referred to as the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition, Aśoka, because he was such a staunch patron of the Buddhist Saṅgha, is barely mentioned, except as a name in the dynastic list of the Mauryas. The title which Aśoka took, *devā naṁpiya*, the beloved of the gods, is treated with contempt in much of brahmanical literature. It is only in Buddhist historiography that he is a figure

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[28] *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. 3, 195 ff.

[29] Joanna Williams, *The Art of Gupta India: Empire and Province* (Princeton, 1982), 96 ff.

of exceptional historical importance. Or can we assume that his historical importance was known, but not reflected in brahmanical texts? This seems more likely.

This is not the only example of the Guptas making connections with the Mauryas. At Girnar there is a third inscription of the later Gupta, Skandagupta, who records that the embankment of the Sudarshan lake dam burst once again due to heavy rain in AD 456. The local governor, Cakrapālita, had it repaired. These inscriptions, ranging over 800 years, are clearly linked to the building and breeching of a dam. What is impressive is that the previous breaches were known and recorded. There is a suggested continuity in the engraving of the inscriptions, and it would seem that the earlier ones could still be read since their subject matter was familiar.

A set of grants from Damodarpur in eastern India is not just a record of information but refers to the state's record keepers and permission from the state to sell some land to an individual to enable him to make a benefaction.[30] These copper-plate inscriptions mark an historical watershed as they are sale deeds of land transactions, which were an new and significant feature from this period. Land is purchased by private persons to be gifted to religious beneficiaries to acquire merit for the donor and his parents. This was frequent in Buddhist donations, but here the beneficiaries are *brāhmaṇas*. In one case the request is for tax-free fallow land which has not been previously gifted. This required the checking of the records relating to the land, and the price was doubtless fixed in accordance with the state's demand.

A series of such purchases was made over a period of about a hundred years from AD 443 to 533 during the rule of the later Gupta kings, and the dates are recorded in detail as required for legal documents. The donation was used to provide a residence for *brāhmaṇas*, to build two small temples, and to conduct rituals.

The dates given for the Gupta rulers provide a chronology and a genealogy. Royal titles are more elaborate—*paramādaivata paramabhaṭṭāraka mahārājā dhirāja*. This is not merely the influence of earlier Kuṣāna titles, but also marks a demarcation between the self-perception of the earlier *rājās* and the exaggerated sense of persona of the current ones. These inscriptions are symptomatic of a different kind of state. Even if the territory involved is on the periphery of the kingdom, the legalities of its ownership are controlled by a hierarchy of officials involved in both recording and permitting the grant. The matter had also to be passed by the civic administration of the governors and advisers who were officials, such as the *mahattaras*, *aṣṭa-kula-adhikaranas*, *grāmikas*, and *puṣṭapālas*, responsible for maintaining the records. Civic patrons, such as the chief merchant, artisans, and various scribes, were also consulted. Grants of land began

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[30] *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 15, 113 ff.

to be given frequently in the post-Gupta period, often for the performance of rituals, or due to the magnanimity of the ruler. Since some were quite substantial grants, one has to examine possible political reasons as well.

Grants were originally made of revenue from land in lieu of salaries and an income. Gradually, however, because these were hereditary grants, the land itself came to be claimed by the grantee. Grants of land were made to religious and ritual specialists and to selected officers. *Brāhmaṇa* grantees were being recompensed for performing rituals to enhance power or ward off evil, or to provide a genealogy legitimizing the ruler with acceptable genealogical links. If the grant was of wasteland or forest, then it encouraged the grantee to convert it to agricultural use; and interestingly even *brāhmaṇas*, although forbidden from being agriculturalists, did take to this specialization. This is clear from Sanskrit texts such as the *Kṛṣiparāśara*, which is a manual particularly for wet rice cultivation—the most lucrative crop in areas where water could be made available.

Kings conquering neighbouring kingdoms converted the defeated king and made him into a *sāmanta*—often translated as feudatory, but perhaps more correctly, an intermediary. The word is derived from *simā*, the boundary, which originally referred to a neighbour, but subsequently came to apply to an intermediary. It gradually developed into a hierarchy of intermediaries between the peasant and the king. The latter had the power to revoke the grant unless categorically stated to the contrary by the original grantor. This was seldom done, since it created a nucleus of political opposition. Some grants stated that it was more meritorious to preserve a grant than to create a new one.

An example of such a grant at a relatively earlier period is one issued by Prabhāvatī Gupta. She was the daughter of the Gupta king and married into the Vākāṭaka royal family, ruling as the queen regent until her son came of age. The grant reads as follows:

Success. Victory has been attained by the *Bhagavat.* Issued from Nandivardana. There was the *mahārāja*, the illustrious Ghaṭotkaccha, the first Gupta king. His excellent son was the *mahārāja*, the illustrious Candragupta. His excellent son was the *mahārājā dhirāja*, the illustrious Samudragupta, who was born of the Queen Kumāradevī who was the daughter's son of the Licchavi, who performed several *aśvamedhas* (horse sacrifices). His excellent son is the *mahārājādhirāja* Candragupta [II], graciously favoured by him who is a fervent devotee of the *Bhagavat*, who is a matchless warrior on the earth, who has exterminated all kings, whose fame has tasted the water of the four oceans, who has donated many thousands of crores of cows and gold. His daughter, the illustrious Prabhāvatī of the Dharana *gotra*, born of the illustrious Queen Kubernāga who was born in the Nāga family, who is a fervent devotee of the *Bhagavat*, who was the chief queen of the illustrious Rudrasena [II], the *mahārāja* of the Vākāṭakas, who is the mother of the heir apparent, the illustrious Divākarasena, having announced her good health commands the householders of the village *brāhmaṇas* and others in the village of Danguna in the *ahāra* of Suprathistha to the east of Vilavanaka to the south of Shirshagrama to the west of Kadapinjana to the north of Sidivivaraka as follows:

Be it known to you that on the twelfth lunar day of the bright fortnight of Karttika we have, for augmenting our own religious merit, donated this village with the pouring out of water to the *ācārya* Chanalasvāmin, who is a devotee of the *Bhagavat*, as a gift not previously made after having offered it to the footprints of the *Bhagavat*. Wherefore, you should obey all his commands with proper respect. And we confer here on him the following exemptions incidental to an *agrahāra* granted to the *caturvidyā brāhmaṇas* as approved by former kings: it is exempt from providing grass, hides for seats and charcoal for touring officers; exempt from purchasing alcohol and digging salt; exempt from mines and *kadira* trees; exempt from supplying flowers and milk; it carries the right to hidden treasures and deposits and major and minor taxes. Wherefore this grant should be maintained and augmented by future kings. Whoever disregarding our order will cause obstructions when complained against by the *brāhmaṇas*, we will inflict punishment together with a fine....

The charter has been written in the thirteenth regnal year and engraved by Cakradāsa.[31]

The grant states the essential information. It invokes the deity Viṣṇu, also referred to as the Bhagavat. It provides the credentials of the donor, the Queen-mother, by giving her family connections and also a résumé of the Gupta kings where, interestingly, she makes specific mention of the names of their mothers. The Licchavi princess was socially a cut above the obscure Gupta family. She also explains why she has the authority to make the grant, that is, because she is the queen regent for her son. As is normal for such inscriptions, she mentions the village granted and indicates its exact location in the district of Supratistha. The purpose of the donation is the acquisition of religious merit, and the donation is sanctified by the pouring of water into the hands of the recipient. The latter is a *brāhmaṇa* well-versed in the four *Vedas*. The duties, obligations, and exemptions of the recipient are listed. The perpetuity of the grant is wished for, with punishments for those who obstruct it. The name of the engraver is mentioned.

Such land grants were often the nucleus of what were later to become principalities and small kingdoms. One such is recorded in the well-known Khoh copper-plate inscription of the *mahārāja* Hastin, issued in the Gupta era of 156, the equivalent of AD 475.[32] He claims to have come from a family of royal ascetics and was generous with his gifts. He is said to have inherited an ancestral gift of a *brahmadeya*, land given to a *brāhmaṇa*, which in this case consisted of eighteen forest kingdoms. He was thus well able to establish himself as a semi-autonomous ruler and gift a village to a *brāhmaṇa* in turn. This is an example of the manner in which many states and kingdoms encroached into forests and cleared them for cultivation and the attendant revenue by coercing the forest-dwellers to become their peasants. Such inscriptions have been used to suggest a new periodization of Indian history in the second millennium AD.

    31 The Poona Plates of Prabhāvatī Gupta in Vasudev Vishnu Mirashi, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. 5: *Inscriptions of the Vakatakas* (1963; Calcutta, 1973), 5 ff.
    32 *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. 3, 93 ff.

A central feature of the inscription as a record was the fact that it was usually precisely dated and followed one of many eras current at the time.[33] Initially, calendrical time was based on the lunar year, each with twelve months in accordance with the *nakṣatras* (constellations). Each month is divided into the bright and dark fortnight, the *śukla* and *kṛṣṇa pakṣa.* The days are the *tithis.* Later there is a shift to the solar year, although some reckonings continue to be made in the lunar year. The division of time that covers the existence of the universe is into four *yugas* (ages): the Kṛta, Treta, Dvāpara, and Kali. We are currently in the fourth. The length of each yuga declines, as does the observance of social codes and customs. The Aihole inscription gives the equivalence of the start of the Kaliyuga, which works out to 3102–1 BC.[34] Modern scholars treat these ages and their figures as relevant to astronomical calculations, but they are rarely used in defining a precise chronology in inscriptions.

Many of the early inscriptions mention regnal years such as those of Aśoka, Khāravela, and some Sātavāhana ones. Others provide a date but do not mention the era. Precision in dating became common from the fifth century AD. The era most commonly used with precision is the *samvat* (era) first referred to as Kṛta, then Mālava, and finally (and most frequently) as Vikrama. This is the equivalent of 58 BC. How and why it came to be used remains controversial. It may commemorate the accession of Azes I, or it may be a calculation used by astronomers at Ujjain, which was the capital of Malava. The other commonly used era was the Śaka era of AD 78, as also the Kalacuri-Cedi era of 248, and the Gupta era of 319. Eras used after the sixth century often related to important events of that period.

Outside the subcontinent in Central Asia and Sri Lanka, inscriptions in Sanskrit are rare. But in south-east Asia they are known from about the fifth to the sixth centuries AD, especially in Cambodia and Vietnam, and they conform to a fairly standard Sanskrit. In Burma and Thailand, inscriptions in Pāli precede those in Sanskrit but continue even after the introduction of Sanskrit. The use of language takes a pattern familiar to India. Khmer, Old Javanese, and Old Malay are also present, together with Sanskrit. Had the use of Sanskrit become something of a formality?

It has been argued that Sanskrit became a public political language in the post-Gupta period and came to form a cosmopolis—a cultural formation that transcended political boundaries and religious affiliations.[35] The use of Sanskrit-linked politics to a political culture beyond the region, whereas the later inclusion of regional languages in inscriptions were records of specific

[33] Dines Chandra Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy* (Delhi, 1965), 119 ff.; and Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy*, 180 ff.

[34] J. F. Fleet, 'The Kaliyuga Era of BC 3102', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1911), 479–96, 675–98.

[35] Sheldon Pollack, 'The Cosmopolitan Vernacular', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 57 (1998), 1, 6–37.

local powers. Could the same not be said of Prākrit in the Mauryan and post-Mauryan period? Why then did Sanskrit become the hegemonic language during this period?

Epigraphic Sanskrit was not of a uniform standard. A major stylistic departure from earlier inscriptions was the *praśasti*. Techniques of *kāvya* were used in *praśastis* whose authors were sometimes court poets. It gradually became formulaic. But it had a purpose. Obscure families claiming to be royal used the *praśasti* to latch themselves onto the *kṣatriya vaṃśas* (lineages) given in the *Purāṇas.* The *praśasti* accommodated upward mobility among ruling families. The inscription terminated with a statement in Sanskrit mentioning the author, the scribe, and the engraver, who were virtually the witnesses and added to the legitimacy. The *praśasti* had some affinities with the *carita* literature of royal biographies from the seventh century. The functional portion of such inscriptions was less literary, although crucial as a legal document. It came to be written quite often in the regional language, to ensure its accessibility to local administration. The Sanskrit passages were a formality. In a sense the resort to regional languages acted as the parallel to variants in Prākrit.

The multiplicity of kingdoms, each with a court copying the more powerful ones, required an array of Sanskrit-literate scribes, officials, and ritual specialists. Intermediaries were created through their control of expansive grants of land in settled lands or forests, and the acquisition of their inhabitants as labour. Inscriptions attempt to encapsulate the political order of the time, where sovereignty had to be acquired and protected. Sovereignty was dependent on a hierarchy of political relationships and was frequently founded on a control of major economic resources—the balancing of these was essential. Those who could extend resources were central to the polity. Did *brā hmaṇa* grantees become agricultural entrepreneurs? Since land was permanent wealth, it became hereditary, enabling the *brāhmaṇa* to participate in the political culture and stamp it with the accoutrements of his culture' such as Sanskrit as the language of authority.

Added to this was the claim to controlling the supernatural and the unforeseen through ritual. Parallel to this was the tradition of knowledge of various kinds preserved or rendered into Sanskrit, and going back many centuries, now reinforced by the functional use of Sanskrit. The polity became a play between those appropriating the expanded agricultural economy, underlining caste status that included a larger range of occupational and status identities becoming castes, and the emergence of the many sects of Puranic Hinduism as a system of religious incorporation. These activities had moved from the patronage of merchants and religious communities and some members of royalty, as in the many Prākrit inscriptions. They were now centred on the royal court, and the major players were kings and members of the royal family and those associated with them as ministers and scribes. The keeping of records shifted from the monasteries and local centres to the royal courts and prestigious families.

TIMELINE/KEY DATES

321–185 BC	Mauryan dynasty
268–232 BC	Aśoka Maurya
261–246 BC	Antiochus II Theos
285–247 BC	Ptolemy II Philadelphos
276–239 BC	Antigonus Gonatas
Mid 3rd cent. BC	Magas
*c.*183–147 BC	Puṣyamitra Śuṅga
1st cent. BC	Khāravela
2nd cent. BC	Demetrius
50 BC–AD 250	Sātavāhana dynasty
57 BC	Vikrama era
AD 78	Śaka era
2nd cent. AD	Rudradāman
1st cent.–3rd cent. AD	Kuṣāna dynasty
1st cent. BC–4th cent. AD	Śaka rulers
3rd cent.–4th cent. AD	Ikṣvāku dynasty
3rd cent.–5th cent. AD	Vakāṭakas
AD 319–467	Gupta dynasty
AD 335–375	Samudragupta
AD 475	Hastin

ABBREVIATIONS

CII	*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*
DED	*Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*
EI	*Epigraphia Indica*
MRE	*Major Rock Edict (of Aśoka)*
SE	*Separate Edict (of Aśoka)*

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Chapter 25

Epilogue

G. E. R. Lloyd

Any attempt to reconstruct the early history of historiography faces severe problems. How are we to determine what counts as 'historical writing' in cultures where there is no indigenous—or as the social anthropologists say, 'actors'— category that corresponds even approximately to any such genre? Indeed there may be no explicit distinctions drawn between what we would call factual accounts and what we consider fictional ones or works of the imagination. The lack of clearly defined genres or modes of writing does not, to be sure, prevent us from using the documents that have come down to us as sources for the recon- struction of the histories of the cultures concerned. But it is evidently a fallacy to jump from the fact that we can do so in *our* efforts to write history, to any conclusion that that was necessarily part of the original purpose for which *they* were composed. Time and again, in the discussions in the preceding chapters of this volume we encounter examples of writings that were concerned with presenting or constructing an idealized picture of past events, not one that is to be judged by how closely it sticks to ascertainable facts. This is illustrated in Deborah Boedeker's discussion (chapter 6) of the relations between early Greek poetry and history, and several instances occur in John Van Seters' analysis (chapter 4) of the various strands that go to make up the Bible. While events are there set out in a chronological sequence *as if* the accounts were purely factual, the authors had specific, distinctive, generally ideological, agendas, such as the justification of claims made on behalf of the chosen people of Israel, or concerning the sacredness of its institutions.

Before I embark on some detailed comments on the variety of traditions that the preceding chapters have brought to light, it is advisable to spell out some of the anthropological, sociological, and philosophical issues that pose problems for our investigation.[1] First, anthropological. It might be assumed that every human group has an interest in its past and therefore a concern with its history. But the conception of the past and the nature of that interest differ, and so

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[1] I draw here on my discussion in *Disciplines in the Making: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Elites, Learning and Innovation* (Oxford, 2009).

whether the concern is what we can call an historical one becomes problematic. The notion that time forms a continuum leading from the past, through the present, to the future, is, as the anthropologists have shown, far from universal. For some cultures the time of heroes or of gods is qualitatively different from the time of today,[2] as also often is sacred time from profane time within the experience of people who live now.[3] Sometimes, as in some ancient Greek writers, time is not an abstract entity, but takes on the characteristics of the events that happen within it, as when Homer speaks of the *nostimon ēmar*, the 'day of return', or the *doulion ēmar*, the day of enslavement.

We think of time as linear, though many peoples are reported to hold, or at least are interpreted as holding, some idea of cyclical time.[4] In one version of this, time repeats itself precisely[5]—an idea that tends to negate any conception of history as a sequence of unique events.[6] Does the past start with the creation of the world or at some point closer to the present? Others have held that time will end, whether in a merely physical cataclysm or in a moral one with a reckoning of scores in a Last Judgement when God's will will be seen to be done and the destiny of his chosen people fulfilled. Nor should we forget that our own everyday notion of linear time is hard to square with the cosmological or physical idea of time as the fourth dimension in the spacetime manifold.

Such divergences and disagreements naturally affect what history may mean for a particular group, and whether indeed the group thinks of the past historically. Historiography, in some societies, developed by breaking free from mythology, not in the sense that it made myths redundant, but rather that it offered itself as an alternative to an account of the past in purely mythical terms, which left questions of how one got from time then to the present quite unanswered. Attempts to bring order into memory provide a powerful motive for recording events as we say chronologically, but in many societies in many contexts what is remembered is treasured as a repository of wisdom without any sense of the need—or even the possibility—either to verify the memory, or to date the events claimed as remembered. Besides, which events are the important ones, and how they are to be interpreted, involve more or less conscious selection and judgement. How far a society, or a group within it, creates a history to confirm the image of itself that it wants to have accepted is, therefore, a recurrent issue.

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[2] Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Black Hunter*, trans. A. Szegedy-Maszak (Baltimore, 1986), ch. 2.
[3] E. R. Leach, *Rethinking Anthropology* (London, 1961).
[4] Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Time in Ancient Historiography', *History and Theory*, 6 (1966), 1–23, especially pointed out how oversimplified it is to identify cyclical time as 'the' Greek notion on the subject; cf. Louis Gernet, *The Anthropology of Ancient Greece*, trans. John Hamilton and Blaise Nagy (Baltimore, 1981).
[5] Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1954).
[6] Romila Thapar, *Time as a Metaphor of History: Early India* (Delhi, 1996), 5–6. Thapar further pointed out there and in ch. 23 in this volume that the notion of cyclical time is combined with that of linear time in Indian thought.

Next there are sociological questions. Among those that need to be addressed in any general comparative survey of historiography are the following. Who were the historians? Were they officials, hired by rulers or the state, and if so, did they have access to official archives, and what did those archives comprise? Or were they private individuals? In any case what were the sources of their evidence, and how did they select and check it? How did they evaluate oral testimony in comparison with whatever written records were available? How did they cope with the unreliability of living witnesses in reporting their own experiences, let alone when they recounted what was supposed to have happened long ago? What difference did it make how they themselves recorded events; that is, the genre and the medium they selected to do so, whether on monumental inscriptions, in oral or written poetry, or in other writings? Who were the inscriptions addressed to—the living, the dead, the gods? Were whatever books that were written bought and sold openly, or only to be found in exceptional libraries, in the palaces of rulers, for instance, or in state archives? The ancient histories that are extant have all come down to us as texts, and this has the effect of 'freezing' a version of the past at a particular juncture. In addition, there may be more or less determined efforts to appropriate the past and to control its interpretation. From our point of view, as consumers of history, we have, of course, to make the best use we can of whatever information is available, conscious, as we must be, of its limitations, not just in the sense of the enormous lacunae in the evidence, but also in the processing it has undergone.

Then, who decided when and why inscriptions should be set up, and were the historians given, or did they determine for themselves, the aims and objectives of their work? Did they all agree about what these should be, or were there rival views among the historians themselves, about their craft? The materials in the preceding chapters enable us to distinguish, in principle, no less than eleven different, overlapping, non-exclusive aims. These are: (1) entertainment, (2) memorializing or commemorating, (3) glorification or celebration and their converses, vilification and denigration, (4) legitimizing a current regime or a newly established one, (5) justifying past actions and policies, (6) explaining why things happened as they did, (7) offering instruction on the basis of past experience, (8) providing records for administrative use, lists of anything from the prices of commodities to the names and dates of magistrates or rulers, (9) warning, admonishing, or remonstrating with, monarchs, statesmen, or other responsible agents or groups, on moral or just on prudential grounds, (10) criticizing others' interpretations of the past, including, especially, those on offer from other historians, and (11) 'just' recording the past; that is, telling the truth about it, saying how it was—*wie es eigentlich gewesen*, as Leopold von Ranke has expressed it. Each of those categories has a variety of subspecies, depending on whether the focus of the historians' attention is political and constitutional affairs, military history, economic or social history, or whatever—not that the choice between those options is ever entirely innocent, since, as I shall be considering

later, it may, and usually does, correspond to a particular political or at least educational agenda.

Then a set of questions immediately follows on from the last paragraph. How far were the historians aware that their aims, assigned or chosen, might prejudice, or at least would inevitably influence, their accounts? What did their own writing owe to existing literature, whether to poetry, for instance, or to rhetoric, or how far did they set out deliberately to distinguish it from other genres, or from the work of other historians indeed, and if so, on what grounds? Did they self-consciously define their own perspective or identify with one or other of the groups whose activities they were describing? In relation to any of the above aims, did they see themselves as holders of a society's, a nation's, conscience, or as the defenders of the past, or its critics, or just its observers? Did they think of their work as essentially directed towards contemporary issues, or was the study of the past undertaken in some sense for its own sake?

The last of my preliminary remarks concerns the philosophical problems of historiography.[7] Three stand out as fundamental. The first is that *no description can be entirely neutral, entirely value-free.* This commonplace of the philosophy of science affects all historical accounts as well. Of course we can, and should, distinguish between greater theory-ladenness and less. Some descriptions are closer to straight observation statements. But every description presupposes a conceptual framework that carries a theoretical load. A writer can be aware of the problem and make an effort to steer clear of the more obviously emotive terms or tendentious concepts. But even the claimed objectivity of, for example, statistical tables, is only a relative one: for how have the data been collected, how and why selected? To be sure, statistical analysis and the quantitative assessment of probabilities are not the concern of any ancient civilization, but we are often presented with bare lists, of rulers for example, that purport to be correct and complete. Yet such lists that have come down to us, in writings or inscriptions, from different civilizations, at differing periods, are of very varying degrees of accuracy, as is discussed in chapters 1–4 especially. Meanwhile the two basic points on the issue of objectivity are, first, that any writer is bound to have some viewpoint, some theoretical presuppositions; and second, that every writer will choose some questions, and not others, on which to focus. Even when objectivity is made an explicit goal, it is always circumscribed by prior decisions as to what it is important to be objective about.

The second philosophical problem of historiography is that *history as instruction, historia magistra vitae in the expression revived recently by Reinhart Koselleck,*

[7] What one may call the philosophy of history in the ancient world has been brilliantly discussed by, among others, Momigliano, 'Time in Ancient Historiography'; M. I. Finley, *The Use and Abuse of History* (London, 1975); and most recently François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité* (Paris, 2003); and id., *Évidence de l'histoire* (Paris, 2005). A variety of different points of view, for example those of Roberto Nicolai and Catherine Darbo-Peschanski, are represented in John Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2007).

is also fundamentally ambivalent.[8] Instruction, we must ask, for whom, for whose benefit, by whom, from whose perspective? Thucydides, for example, who certainly meant his history to be instructive, makes certain presuppositions, notably that human nature is basically the same. But is that so always and everywhere? Thucydides is the diagnostician of the ills of the city-state, *stasis* being a prime example. But how far are they specific to a particular political regime; that is, just a problem for Greek-style city-states? In a monarchy, let alone a tyranny, disagreement among political factions may not be the chief problem. It is true that greed, selfishness, and *hubris* have some claim to be universal, and some would say give justification enough for Thucydides' belief in the basic uniformity of human nature, and the idea that history repeats itself. Maybe so. But everyone's ideas about what it is to avoid political disaster will reflect their political ideals, for sure, and of course they are far from uniform.

That is the first problem for *historia magistra*—that the instruction will only be valid for everyone, universally, insofar as there is agreement about human nature, and about how the state should be run, and how interstate relations should be managed for the best. But whose 'best' is that? Everyone's equally? But what is there to guarantee that that ideal is agreed to, and if agreed to, will guide policy and action?

Instruction, I asked, by whom? Thucydides' authority depends on his coming across as impartial, but of course he is not totally so. He has his distinctive viewpoint—on how the leadership of Pericles contrasted with that of Cleon, for instance. Of course, swept along by the force of his rhetoric, or at least by the apparent reasonableness of his value judgements, we tend to agree with him, do we not? We only rarely have good alternative sources that may lead us to question the views he was promulgating. He has certainly been enormously successful in persuading many scholars of a certain view of Athenian demagogues, though that has of course been challenged.[9]

So any historians who set out to instruct are faced with something of a dilemma. The more they make their own values and perspective explicit, the more suspicious their readers may become (unless they happen to share those values). But *not* to have *any* preferences is, in any case (my first philosophical point), impossible, and insofar as any historian succeeds in presenting himself as quite neutral about events, the lessons the readers themselves draw from the

account will be left *up to them.* They will scan the description of events for ideas about what policies succeed, and which lead to disaster. But there is an obvious risk of making the general's mistake of entering the next war brilliantly equipped for the last one, but quite at a loss in the face of the new enemy. You learn from the past about the past, and that is not necessarily a good guide to the future, however fascinating it may be to ponder the reasons why the past turned out in the way it did. To be sure, history provides a rich, almost inexhaustible, source of examples, precedents, and potential analogies. But that does not get round the problem of determining which are the ones that are relevant to the case in hand. Indeed, the very variety of exemplars may confuse as much as illuminate. Selection is inevitable and there is no algorithm for success.

In other words, history as historiography cannot be a reliable *magistra vitae* since we cannot rely on history as the past repeating itself. We have no option but to use our own judgement on each occasion as to whether, or how far, or in what respects, it will.

The third fundamental philosophical problem follows from my remarks about perspective and leads into even trickier issues. *An historian's account of events will not be just in terms of individuals, but of groups.* When wars or struggles for power are involved—and when are they not?—the rival factions will have to be identified. They may be, for example, the people, the few, the Athenians, the Lacedaimonians, the Greeks, the barbarians, the Romans, the state of Qin, the black-haired people, or the Xiongnu. It is sometimes assumed that such terms are self-explanatory, but none is exactly neutral. True, some are more questionable than others. There is not much doubt about who, in principle, held citizen rights at Athens. But who exactly the *kaloi kagathoi* were (the 'honourable gentlemen' or 'people of the better sort') or how coherent a body 'the *dēmos*' or the 'many' (*hoi polloi*) were, are far more problematic questions.

Given that one of the aims of the historian may be celebration, the question of who exactly is being celebrated is important. Is it the whole of the population, or those in charge, or just the prince himself? Herodotus opens with the statement that he will record the great and remarkable deeds of Greeks and barbarians, and in practice he lives up to that even-handed principle, at least up to a point, even though his own preferences emerge from time to time. But so often the historian, covertly or explicitly, takes on the task of the glorification of the victorious, finessing the problem of who the victory really belonged to. It was the destiny of the Romans to rule (as if that were inevitable)—but 'Rome' was certainly transformed in the process of conquering most of the world it knew. Similarly in more modern times, we are to learn about the glory of 'France', or how 'Germany' deserves to be called the home of a super-race, or how 'Britain' did not so much conquer, as civilize, the world. But each of those topoi presupposes a concept of the nation as a whole and a very nationalistic one at that, however the nation is constructed, whether politically, ethnically, or culturally. Writing history from the point of view of the defeated or the oppressed is a rare

phenomenon (cf. Jonathan J. Price on Josephus, chapter 9) and all the more precious when it occurs as something of an antidote to the customary hegemonic perspective. Yet the identity of the vanquished can be just as problematic as that of the victors.

The fundamental difficulty here is that the groups that the historian sees as the main agents in events are all constructs. The races, the nations involved, are especially so—even when they correspond to the actors' own ideas of themselves.[10] The same point applies also to the subgroups in question, though again the historians' labels may tally with actors' categories. Individuals are, to be sure, more easily identifiable, but they can be as much subject to stereotyping as the groups to which they are thought to belong.

One easy post-modern reaction to the impossibility of totally value-free history is to settle for it as fiction—a concept that would carry Hayden White's idea of emplotment to something of an extreme.[11] But that, in my view, will not do either.[12] The notion of truth we need is one that invokes the appropriate criteria for verification for the context in question. This is not to suppose that a definitive account is possible. But if historians cannot be entirely objective, they can be more or less scrupulous in setting out the evidence. To take a modern example, they can, after all, be caught out getting it wrong: the burning of the Reichstag in February 1933 was not the result of a coordinated communist plot.[13] Getting an account wrong inadvertently is one thing: falsifying it deliberately—as in the denial of the Holocaust—is quite another. If no description can be complete, some omissions are more harmless than others. The historian's account cannot be submitted to an *experimental* test, as when a scientist's results are checked by another scientist to see whether they are replicable. But that is not to say that there is no difference between the selection of the evidence to present, and its fabrication.

That is at the level of what is represented as having occurred: but of course the problems become increasingly difficult when suggestions are offered to explain *why* what happened happened, why things turned out as they did, why the Qin dynasty collapsed after a mere fifteen years, for instance, or why the Athenians

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[10] Cf. Rémi Brague, *Eccentric Culture*, trans. S. Lester (South Bend, 2002).

[11] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, 1973); id., *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore, 1978); and id., 'Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth', in Saul Friedlander (ed.), *Probing the Limits of Representation* (Cambridge: Mass., 1992), 37–53.

[12] Carlo Ginzburg, 'Just One Witness', in Friedlander (ed.), *Probing the Limits of Representation*, 82–96; Ginzburg, *History, Rhetoric and Proof* (Hanover, 1999); Peter Burke, 'Overture. The New History: Its Past and its Future', in id. (ed.), *New Perspectives in Historical Writing* (1991; 2nd edn., Cambridge, 2001), 1–24; and Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer (Chicago, 2004), stand out as particularly clear-headed recent contributions to the debate on new trends in historiography.

[13] That negative conclusion is clear, though historians still debate who precisely *was* responsible for the fire.

lost the Peloponnesian War, or why Caesar crossed the Rubicon, let alone the reasons for the 'decline' of the Roman Empire—though what 'decline' that was is far from transparent. Diagnoses of what that decline consisted of, and why it occurred, have an unnerving way of being adjusted to the theory that is being promoted precisely to explain it. Similarly and more generally, the choice of historical explanantia often follows, rather than precedes, the explanations on offer.

The way I have presented the fundamental philosophical problems, historiography might be thought to face an impossible task, and it is hardly surprising that in practice we find different types of compromises being made by different individuals and in different traditions, whether consciously or otherwise. Much will depend, to be sure, on which of the eleven aims I identified is given priority, or the balance between them. Insofar as entertainment becomes the sole aim, that tends to disqualify the writing as history, that is according to the more usual view, though it will still count as 'storytelling', 'histoire' in the sense that is run together, in French for instance, with 'history'. Accounts of past events are included in Shakespeare's historical plays, but they do not set out to be what we generally recognize to be history: they are not our preferred sources for understanding the past, even though Aeschylus' *Persae*, for example, has been mined by both ancients and moderns for the information it contains on the events it dramatizes and, for sure, mere entertainment was not the *sole* aim of historical plays, either in antiquity or in Shakespeare's day. Again some writers make no pretence at objectivity, but just set out to glorify. Official historians may be obliged to go in for unabashed celebration, of the victorious forces, of the all-conquering ruler, or alternatively the marvellously beneficent and wise one, though as is clear from China especially, some official historians may be fiercely independent-minded. There is a very strong tradition of remonstration in China—the subject of much explicit comment. I shall be returning to this below.

But when the historians take their stand by the truth, the questions that then arise include how they went about deciding what that was, how they collected and evaluated the evidence available to them, how far they acknowledged its limitations and indeed their own fallibility, and how far they adopted different points of view to achieve a balance between them.

We cannot expect uniformity even within a single culture, and indeed we do not find it. In both Greece and China it took some time for historiography, or something pretty close to it, to be recognized as a genre, while in ancient Mesopotamia and in Egypt that process was even more hesitant, as chapters 1–3 amply demonstrate. The same can also be said of India, although there the issues have been obfuscated by repeated misguided attempts—by Western commentators especially—to deny that there was any Indian historiography. However, already the epic tradition, exemplified in the Mahābhārata and other narrative writings, manifests an historical consciousness, as Romila Thapar (chapter 23) puts it, even though one that is often overlaid, unsurprisingly, with preoccupations with

claims to authority and legitimacy. But competing accounts of the past, and rival presentations of the roles of individuals or dynasties, stimulated a concern to validate claims to correctness or truth. No doubt there are several distinctive features of the Indian data, such as the particular shifting balance between oral and written traditions, and the specific changes that occurred in the sources of patronage. But Thapar's careful analysis leaves one with a clear picture of the gradual growth, in India too, of historiographical writing.

However, the two best documented traditions are the Graeco-Roman and the Chinese. In both cases we can trace diachronic developments over many centuries in some detail, and I shall concentrate here on commenting on some of these.

In Greece, as Robin Osborne shows (chapter 5), inscriptions served to shape a conception of the past even before historical writing itself began, and when that happened, as Jonas Grethlein points out (chapter 7), historiography had to define itself in contradistinction to competing genres—not that, to start with, the boundaries between these were stable or rigid. While *historia* was a useful and prominent actors' category, it covered far more than what we would recognize as historiography. It could refer to any research or its end product, so it spanned a wide range of what we would consider different disciplines.[14] What we would call geography and ethnography would be perfectly good examples, as would science and its many branches—the study of animals, or plants, or minerals, or meteorology, and of nature as a whole, *peri phuseōs historia*. Nevertheless *historikos* (without qualification) is already used by Aristotle in the *Poetics* (1451b1) when he contrasts the work that person does with poetry. Much to the chagrin of modern historians, Aristotle famously considers poetry more philosophical and serious than history, since the former deals with the universal, the latter just with the particular. That tends to ignore my philosophical point that any account of what Alcibiades did or what was done to him (Aristotle's example) has to make use of general and indeed evaluative concepts—as when he is said to have 'betrayed' the Athenians, for instance. Aristotle's example of an *historikos* is Herodotus, though Herodotus' *historiē*, we should say, goes well beyond the historical recording of events—in particular in the Egyptian and the Scythian *logoi* which are, nevertheless, perfectly good examples of *historiē* in the general Greek sense. That general sense was never superseded, so that Greek historiography was always associated with a wide genus of inquiries.

Even before Herodotus, Greek writing about human experience often presented itself as rivalling and doing better than other accounts. Much of it strikes us as composed under the aegis of the competitive, whether with others who were recognized as in some sense colleagues, or with other writers in other genres.

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[14] Cf. for example, Catherine Darbo-Peschanski, 'The Origins of Greek Historiography', in Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, i. 27–38.

Hecataeus ridiculed the 'many tales' of the Greeks (in general) as 'absurd'. His own accounts, by contrast, so he claimed, are *true* (*alēthēs*, Fr 1). But that did not cut any ice with Herodotus, who pretty clearly has Hecataeus in mind when he dismisses the speculative accounts of world geography as 'laughable' (4.36, cf. 42). At the very start of his presentation (*apodexis*) of his own *historiē* (1.1), Herodotus gives us what others, the *logioi* of the Persians, had had to say about the reasons the Greeks and Barbarians waged war with one another, though a few chapters later he contrasts that with what the Phoenicians say (1.5), which leads immediately in turn into what he, Herodotus (he uses the first person pronoun, *egō*), does and does not *know*. He suspends judgement on those barbarian accounts, but says he knows (*oida*) about the first person who committed injustice against the Greeks—who turns out to be Croesus.

We then embark on the narrative, with its extraordinary mixture of Herodotus reporting eyewitnesses, and recording different versions and different explanations of events, sometimes adjudicating between different views, sometimes withholding judgement.[15] We are dealing with an author who has a heightened sense of the possibilities of alternative accounts and of the need to evaluate his sources.[16] True, how far he simply constructed—that is, invented—his accounts of Egypt and Scythia to suit his strategic purposes—to provide foils for Athens and Greece, in fact, as François Hartog brilliantly argued[17]—is controversial. There are some who insist that Herodotus' account of Scythia, for instance, is confirmed by independent archaeological evidence. But that he *ended up* with useful foils is clear.

But Thucydides criticizes Herodotus in turn, without naming him. At 1.20, he corrects an idea that is found in Herodotus (6.57) to the effect that the Spartan kings had a double vote in the Gerousia. More fundamentally he distances himself from anyone whose accounts (he suggests) are 'more suited to entertain the listener than to the truth' (1.21).[18] Their stories are beyond verification or scrutiny, having 'won their way to the mythical' (*muthōdes*) where, in a collocation associated with unverifiability, that term clearly takes on pejorative undertones, although elsewhere *muthos* does not always imply 'mythical' in the sense of fiction, but is a general term for story or account.[19] Thucydides thus

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[15] Herodotus 2.44 is one typical text in which he explicitly refers to his own travels and autopsy (that is, first-hand eyewitness experience), undertaken, he says, in order to establish the clear facts, in this case concerning the cult of Heracles.

[16] Cf. Robert L. Fowler, 'Herodotos and his Contemporaries', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 116 (1996), 62–87.

[17] François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley, 1988).

[18] In the terms of the aims I set out above, it is clear that Thucydides criticizes some of his predecessors for focusing on the first one—entertainment—while he himself lays claims to telling the truth about the past (number 11), and offering instruction on its basis (number 7).

[19] The ambivalence of both terms in the *muthos logos* dichotomy has been well analyzed by Claude Calame, *Mythe et l'histoire dans l'antiquité grecque* (Lausanne, 1996); and id., 'The Rhetoric of *Muthos* and *Logos*: Forms of Figurative Discourse', in R. Buxton (ed.), *From Myth to Reason?* (Oxford, 1999), 119–43.

implicitly claims to be more scrupulous than his predecessor in evaluating his evidence,[20] and there is an obvious sense in which this is easier when the account deals with recent or contemporary events, rather than with those that have taken place in the distant past. Yet how you obtain to the truth of even contemporary events via eyewitnesses is far more complicated than those who have not tried it imagine. But it is not just that his methods are different: his aim is to provide a possession for always, a *ktēma es aiei*—he means a repository of wise advice, in the famous phrase of 1.22. This is thanks to the assumption that human affairs obey constant principles, and that history may in that sense be expected to repeat itself. He reaches out to future readers. His tactic to defeat his rivals is to claim that his work is no mere competition piece (*agōnisma*), but will prove useful for generations to come.

Subsequent Greek and Roman history is enormously varied, in subject matter, in the targeted audience, and in the approaches that different writers adopt (cf. John Dillery, chapter 8). There are biographies of individuals, annals, local histories, and histories of famous families, of institutions, of intellectual inquiries such as philosophy or mathematics or medicine. Many historians took on more or less official assignments, not just to record but also to celebrate and glorify.[21] Some Greek historians faced particular problems in coming to terms with Roman hegemony. In the second century BC Polybius claimed originality for his work, first because of the supreme importance of the events it dealt with—how it was that, in a matter of less than fifty-three years, so he says, Rome came to conquer practically the whole known world—and second on the grounds that it was the first truly universal history.[22]

In the next couple of centuries a sequence of Roman historians—Sallust, Livy, Tacitus—take up the theme of the fortunes of Rome, interspersing their narratives with moralizing, if often ambivalent, comments on the signs of its incipient decline, as Republican institutions gave way to Imperial ones, and virtue, so it was said, yielded to self-indulgence and vice. In the first century AD, the Jew Josephus, writing in Greek, amalgamated, with considerable success,

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[20] The importance of Thucydides' claim for the truthfulness of his history has been powerfully argued by Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton, 2002). But as we shall see, Sima Qian too shares the ambition of producing a reliable account of events from which future generations can learn.

[21] One of the first of these was Alexander's historian, Callisthenes, who, like many Chinese official historians, came to a sticky end after he had fallen out with his patron. He was executed after he had been implicated in a plot against Alexander's life. As we shall be noting for Chinese historians, holding an official post may give an individual a privileged position, but does not necessarily imply that the historian will identify with the policies of his or her employers.

[22] Polybius book I, 1–4. He was to some extent anticipated in this ambition by Ephorus (fourth century), as he recognizes, although he says that Ephorus dealt only with the Greek world (V 33). Polybius criticized the other contender, Timaeus, not just for the limitations of the scope of his work, but more especially for his failure to conduct first-hand research and for his lack of experience in military affairs (XII 25–27); cf. John Dillery in this volume.

Greek tropes of the search for objectivity with Jewish assumptions that history is the working out of God's will (Price, chapter 9).[23] Once history was being composed by Christian writers, two major problems presented themselves: that of reconciling a sense of the glory of Rome's pagan past with the Christian present (see Alison Cooley, chapter 10) and, more fundamentally, that of explaining the difference that the singularity of the advent of Christ made to world history.

The history of Graeco-Roman historiography is throughout strongly marked by a characteristic we find also in Graeco-Roman philosophy: namely, its overt competitiveness. Their own accounts, the historians claim, tell the true story, based on reliable sources: others' narratives are incomplete or biased, or merely the fictional constructs of their authors. In the process the terms *historiē* and *historia* are appropriated for the kind of research-based account the more positivist historians favour. By contrast, *muthos* is often downgraded as flawed, and yet their own narratives generally contain considerable doses of rhetoric, quite apart from reflecting their personal political opinions.

It has often been claimed that the roots of modern Western historiography are to be found in classical Greek antiquity, but the institutional framework was transformed once it was professionalized. That depended on its winning a place in university curricula, where we should recall that in the West it was accepted as a subject for serious post-graduate study long after law, medicine, or theology.[24] Moreover, the way that history came to be accepted as a key element in humanist undergraduate study in different European countries not only reflected a nationalist agenda, but also generally tallied with a distinct educational programme, geared to what students were thought to need to have mastered to take their places, in due course, among the governing cadres. Naturally enough, those who taught them considered themselves something of an (academic) elite, though their claim to that position did not go uncontested by the representatives of other disciplines.

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[23] Cf. already Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 'Du bon usage de la trahison', in *Flavius Josèphe: La Guerre des Juifs*, trans. Pierre Savinel (Paris, 1977), 9–115; and Vidal-Naquet, *Flavius Josèphe et la Guerre des juifs* (Paris, 2005).

[24] The overt competitiveness I remarked on in Graeco-Roman historiography continues to mark later European work, with the added feature of the frequent rivalry between different nationalistic traditions. Within just the English-speaking historiographical tradition, indeed, the acrimony of the exchanges that followed the publication of E. H. Carr's *What is History?* in 1961, with interventions by Isaiah Berlin, Geoffrey Elton, Herbert Butterfield, and Hugh Trevor-Roper among others, may be cited as an example where there was not just an intellectual point at issue; namely, the extent to which the historian was bound to be influenced by his or her own beliefs and preoccupations. The dispute spilt over into a debate within the elite over control of the curriculum in the universities, with prominent members of the profession arguing over how and what undergraduates should be taught at Cambridge and elsewhere. The controversies are outlined in Richard J. Evans, 'Introduction to the 40th Anniversary Edition', in E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, 2001).

The development of Chinese historiography manifests some of the same features as those I have mentioned in the Graeco-Roman traditions, but also some distinctive ones. It is as well to note at the outset that some of the canonical texts (*jing*) on which we have to rely to reconstruct early Chinese thought are now viewed in a far more critical and sceptical light than was at one time generally the case.[25] A text such as the *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals] used often to be attributed straightforwardly and in its entirety to Confucius, and other classics were traditionally represented as going all the way back to such legendary figures as the Yellow Emperor. Now many such works are seen as put together from strata of very different periods and provenances, where the text we read is principally the result of editorial work done in the Han dynasty if not later, and in some cases very much later. However, as archaeological work progresses, and more and more texts are discovered in tombs that can be given definite dates, that gives us direct access to *a* version of a canonical writing. But that immediately poses the question of the relation between that version and the later edited work that has been transmitted through the commentary tradition. The notion of a *text* itself has, many think, to be revised: we should think rather of different schools or traditions of the transmission of writings that had no single archetype, where there is no such Urtext which it is the prime duty of modern scholars to try to recover. The problems of interpretation often remain severe even when we can supplement literary evidence with epigraphic and archaeological, in order to get some bearing both on the provenance of the text and on the events it purports to describe.

Nevertheless, some basic points are reasonably secure. Much of the earliest extant written evidence comes from inscriptions on durable materials—turtle shells, ox bones, bronze vessels, as well as on stone. Edward L. Shaughnessy (chapter 15) explores the possibility that what has survived presupposes extensive archival activity and maybe even annalistic narrative history.[26] That remains a conjecture. But it is clear that once we begin to have more comprehensive accounts of events, historiography as such distinguished itself only gradually from other genres—court chronicles, almanacs and annals.

The first Chinese universal history that offers a narrative account of the major dynasties in a well-defined chronological framework is the *Shiji* [Records of the Scribe], compiled by Sima Tan and his son Sima Qian around 90 BC.[27] But the

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[25] Doubts about the authenticity of some works were sometimes expressed already by early commentators from the Han period onwards, but widespread scepticism only starts to become prominent in twentieth-century scholarship (cf. Wai-yee Li in this volume).

[26] L. Vandermeersch, 'La conception chinoise de l'histoire', in Anne Cheng (ed.), *La Pensée en Chine aujourd'hui* (Paris, 2007), 47–74, also suggests what Chinese historiography owes to divinatory practices that go back to the use of Shang oracle bones, on which predictions were made, but also outcomes recorded.

[27] Sima Qian certainly distances himself from some of the more extravagant stories about early times, particularly in relation to the founding of legendary dynasties, but he does not deploy a category that is the equivalent of 'myth', *muthos* in the sense of fiction, in order to do so. Cf. G. E. R. Lloyd, *The Ambitions of Curiosity* (Cambridge, 2002), ch. 1.

Chunqiu offers a precedent for a (minimal) record of events in chronological order; and of the three main commentaries on that text, the *Zuozhuan* [Zuo Tradition] provides a model for an account of the past that offers judgements on the reasons for success or failure. This text belongs to the extensive anecdotal tradition discussed by David Schaberg (chapter 16), and it evidently drew on a mixture of oral and written sources which we now find difficult, or rather impossible, to disentangle, with obvious consequences for its usefulness to us as an historical source. This, and other commentaries on the *Chunqiu* generally, owe more to a concern for literary or rhetorical style, to a delight in the elaboration of stories and to the exploration of the opportunities for moralizing that that presents, than to any single-minded devotion to establishing a reliable account of the facts.[28] Thus, although the *Shiji* owes something to some earlier discussions of past events, its claims to originality are high. Even while later historians, such as Ban Gu, the author of the *Hanshu* [History of the Han], criticized Sima Qian severely, on both stylistic and ideological grounds as well as for his alleged inaccuracies (cf. Steven W. Durrant, chapter 20), in ways that resemble the rivalries we find in Greek historiography, the *Shiji* eventually came, nevertheless, to act as the chief model used by all subsequent Chinese historiography.

A second basic point to be made is that the universal histories that start with the *Shiji* and continue with the long sequence of dynastic histories, from the *Hanshu* onwards, are not *just* history in our sense, any more than much Greek *historia* is. Over and above the account of events, the biographies of individuals and so on, they include treatises on such subjects as the calendar, astronomy, even the waterways, and 'geography'.[29] This is not just because of some interest in those subjects for their own sakes, but in order to provide the most important information that rulers, ministers, or anyone aspiring to office, would need in order to carry on the business of government. The treatises are not there for literary enjoyment, but to instruct—and not just about the past. In terms of the possible goals I identified above, the *Shiji* and its successors exemplify pretty well the entire gamut of them.

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[28] Yet there are passages, in the *Zuozhuan* especially, that emphasize the duty of scribes to record events, however unpopular that might make them. The most notable instance of that, discussed by Wai-yee Li (in this volume), is the account of how first one scribe and then another lost their lives by insisting that the murder of a legitimate king should be entered into the records, though this was eventually done (Duke Xiang 25th Year). It is also important to bear in mind Wai-yee Li's further point, that while moralizing messages form a pervasive theme, the lessons they convey are often ambivalent, and make allowance for judgements on events taken from different perspectives.

[29] How far the Chinese categories of *di li* ('earth patterns', or better, 'terrestrial organisation') and *zhou jun* ('provinces and commanderies') tally with 'geography' is, however, problematic. See Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, 'Conception of Terrestrial Organization in the *Shan hai jing*', *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient*, 82 (1995), 57–110; and ead., 'I testi geografici ufficiali dalla dinastia Han alla dinastia Tang', in Sandro Petruccioli (ed.), *Storia della Scienza*, vol. 2 (Rome, 2001), 190–7.

Third, most of the authors involved held official positions themselves, which impinged on, even on occasion dictated, the nature of their work as historians.[30] We can trace the gradual rise, in China, of the conception of the office of historian as such. Both Sima Tan and Sima Qian held the post of *Taishi*, but in that capacity their duties were more to do with the study of the heavens, in all its manifestations, than with historiography as such. According to the *Hou Hanshu* [History of the Later Han] (25: 3572.1 ff.), composed by Fan Ye, the responsibilities of the *Taishiling* included (1) being in charge of the calendar, (2) choosing auspicious dates for state functions, and (3) recording propitious or adverse omens as they occurred. So it was more from personal ambition that they composed the *Shiji*, rather than because they were ordered to do so, as Ban Gu was later instructed to compose the history of the Han.

The disadvantage of an official role was clearly that the historian could not afford openly to incur the displeasure of the powers that be. At the same time, official historians could tap sources of information that were not available to private individuals. Sima Qian himself points out that he had access to official archives. He frequently complains that much had been lost, destroyed, or misunderstood (*Shiji* 130: 3288, 3296, 3319), yet the material records available to him were still considerable and made his position, in his attempts to investigate the past, far more favourable than that of, say, a Herodotus. The accumulation of available primary and secondary archival material was one factor stimulating the extraordinary growth of Chinese historical writings after the Han. As Albert E. Dien shows (chapter 21), they comprise a considerable variety of types, but whether their authors composed these works as private individuals, or, more often, in their official capacities, access to state archives was a prerequisite, and writers continued to grapple with the problems of reconciling their obligations to their patrons with their sense of the historian's duty to be accurate, frank, and reliable. However, by Tang times, the individual authorship of such works had become more or less submerged in what, by then, had been turned into state-sponsored group projects for the production of very considerable corpora of official histories.

Fourth, the holding of official posts did not prevent these historians from expressing independent critical opinions. From early on in Chinese culture there is, as I have noted, a strong tradition of reprimanding or remonstrating with rulers.[31] To criticize the king, later the emperor, directly, was recognized to be highly dangerous, and in fact many advisers, including several notable historians,

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[30] We may contrast the situation of some Roman historians, whose political status added authority to their narratives, but who did not have official positions qua historians. I owe this point to Andrew Feldherr.

[31] Cf. David Schaberg, 'Remonstrance in Eastern Zhou Historiography', *Early China*, 22 (1998), 133–79; and G. E. R. Lloyd, 'The Institutions of Censure: China, Greece and the Modern World', *Quaderni di Storia*, 62 (2005), 7–52.

such as Ban Gu and Fan Ye, paid for their independent-mindedness, or at least their disagreements with their patrons, with their lives. When Sima Qian fell out with Han Wu Di, he avoided having to commit suicide only by accepting the humiliating punishment of castration—a choice he made, so he tells us, specifically in order to continue his father's work.

However, the Chinese developed sophisticated techniques of oblique criticism of those in power. Commenting adversely on past policies and behaviour was an effective way of indirectly registering disapproval of present ones—in much the same way as Ellen O'Gorman (chapter 12) discusses as happening for Roman historians such as Tacitus. Sima Qian, in an interview with an important minister reported in the *Shiji* (130: 3299; cf. *Hanshu* 62), explains his position. He has of course to agree that, unlike so often in the past, 'all under heaven' is nowadays ruled by an enlightened monarch, Han Wu Di, but he justified his history in part by saying it was still important to spread abroad the record of the emperor's great deeds. But that was not all that he was doing. In the body of the *Shiji* itself (18: 878.4 ff.; cf. 6: 278.9 ff.) he suggests that learning from the past can provide 'a key to success and failure in one's own age'. There is no trumpeted claim that the work is a 'possession for always'; but he reaches out beyond his immediate audience to future readers who will learn from his account of events. To that end, it seems, he deposited one copy of his text in an archive he calls the 'Famous Mountain', and another in the capital 'to await the sages and scholars of later ages', as he tells us himself (*Shiji* 130: 3319–20).

But as Chinese historiography developed and came to be recognized as a well-defined official genre in its own right, the price that had to be paid for this was clear. The independent-mindedness that Sima Tan and Sima Qian had shown was increasingly difficult to maintain in the face of the demands of an official agenda, and the roles of glorifying and legitimating tended to win out over those of instructing, warning, and admonishing. The main exception to this was when, after the Han, historians were commissioned to write the history of an earlier dynasty. That allowed some room for manoeuvre in their criticism of earlier rulers, without challenging, and indeed endorsing, the general doctrine of the Mandate from Heaven.

If neat conclusions as to the nature of ancient historiography are out of the question, given its polyvalent character, let me now, nevertheless, attempt to draw some of the threads of my discussion here together. I started by emphasizing the fundamental problems that face any ambition to record the past neutrally. But there have, of course, been more, and less, resolute attempts to do so, with more or less well-focused attention to that goal as opposed to others. What we may still wish to call 'historiography' is evidently not so much a single well-defined genre as a family of loosely related ones, varying according to the roles and functions of the authors or compilers, the aims they set themselves or were set by others, and the actual uses to which their accounts were put.

Several hypotheses that might at first sight seem to be attractive as a basis to account for the differences between various ancient traditions do not stand up well under scrutiny. So far as antiquity goes, no straightforward correlation can be established between the nature of the political regime, or even the particular political views of the historians themselves, and the mode of historiography favoured. Autocratic regimes no doubt seek greater control than do more liberal ones over the work of those who record their own deeds and performance. But the consistently monarchical political set-up in ancient China was not without its severely independent-minded commentators. Besides, autocrats themselves may look for more than flattery: they may indeed want to find out about the past, and charge historians to report on this with some respect for verifiable facts. Conversely, those who lived in democracies certainly did not necessarily tailor their accounts to please the particular leaders who happened to be in power, but neither did they always abstain from over-optimistic glorification of the workings of democracy.

Every historian's *oeuvre* is bound, to a greater or lesser extent, to reflect their personal views, their sense of the merits or demerits of the age they take as their subject, their hopes and disappointments. But the heterogeneity that is such a feature of the material we have been considering stems mainly from the very variety of the options historiography may set itself. The choice between them will not necessarily be determined by external factors, by patrons, or potential audiences, but will also reflect the historians' own self-image, their sense of their responsibility, their pride in their work, their ambitions, not least to outdo their rivals, either by doing *their* kind of history better than they have, or by advocating and practising a brand new kind of historiography. Thus, competitiveness is often an important stimulus to innovation. Yet against that, historiography has often found itself constrained to remain within the framework set by a traditional agenda, especially when that corresponds to the requirements of officialdom.

The two most powerful motive forces that recur (where both ancient Greece and China in particular are concerned) are first the desire to commemorate, or frankly to celebrate, and second the wish to draw lessons from the past to apply to the present and the future. But first there is, on occasions at least, some tension between these two, insofar as the first, in its glorificatory mode, is clearly one-sided, while the second, to be convincing, has to attempt even-handedness. Second, where a balance is sought between them there is the problem of achieving this—the (philosophical) impossibility of employing a totally value-free conceptual framework in which to cast a description of events. The basic difficulty with the Koselleck programme is, as I have noted, that what we take from the past depends crucially on a judgement of what is relevant—where we may be as likely to be misled by the analogies of history as illuminated by them. Ignoring past events is foolish, but assuming that they are a guide to the future may also be a source of mistaken judgements. Very

few historians seem to have been capable of recognizing the deep-seated ambivalence of their whole enterprise. That may be understandable in ancient times, when considerable efforts needed to be devoted to establishing historiography as an independent genre. But even with modern practitioners of the craft, who display a more self-conscious interest in the philosophy of history, the questions of what the discipline should comprise, the aims it should set itself, and the methods it has to adopt to secure them, remain at points unresolved, and the threat of a collapse into mere subjective judgement, if not pure fiction or naked ideology, continues to loom. It is for that reason, among others, that an exploration of the diversity of ancient traditions continues to be valuable, even in the twenty-first century.

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